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CHAS. G. FINNEY,

THE

AMERICAN REVIVALIST.

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PREFACE.

In publishing the following extracts from the large and costly "Life of Mr. Finney," we think we are supplying a valuable help to all who wish to make the most of their lives for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls. The book is, of course, not a complete record of the life, as we have purposely avoided, as much as possible, passages referring to the theological controversies in which the writer was so frequently engaged. Our object has been simply to reproduce these wonderful stories of victory won by spiritual power, amidst such varied difficulties, in the course of an unusually long life of ceaseless activity for the good of souls. What we wish is not to incite anyone to spend life just as Mr. Finney spent his, which would indeed, to most persons, be impossible; but to arouse every reader—no matter what his circumstances or talents may be—to look and labour for the salvation of multitudes of people by his or her instrumentality, seeing that the excellency of the power by which this can be done is here so clearly shown to be of God, and not of man.

We think we have to-day advantages which Mr. Finney did not possess, and which lay us all under obligation to expect and to attain results far beyond even the wondrous ones which he describes. Instead of having to labour in the face of constant opposition from ministers and members of the churches in which he preached, we have before us a clear ground and nothing to prevent our doing anything we may wish to bring sinners to the Cross.

Bear this in mind as you read the book, and then, if it does not make you ashamed of the little good you have as yet done, you must be dead indeed. But if you do feel ashamed, do not let your shame lead to fear or despair, but rather to self-examination, to thoroughgoing surrender, to faithful prayer, and so to the boundless victory which God is just as wishful to give to you as to anyone else.

C. G. FINNEY,

THE PRESBYTERIAN SALVATIONIST.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EARLY EDUCATION.

I WAS born in Warren, Litchfield county, Connecticut, August 29, 1792. When I was about two years old, my father removed to Oneida county, New York, which was at that time, to a great extent, a wilderness. No religious privileges were enjoyed by the people. Very few religious books were to be had. The new settlers, being mostly from New England, almost immediately established common schools ; but they had among them very little intelligent preaching of the Gospel. I enjoyed the privileges of a common school, summer and winter, until I was fifteen or sixteen years old, and advanced so far as to be supposed capable of teaching a common school myself, as common schools were then conducted.

My parents were neither of them professors of religion, and among our neighbours there were very few religious people. I seldom heard a sermon, unless it was an occasional one from some travelling minister, or some miserable holding forth of an ignorant preacher.

The ignorance of the preachers I heard was such, that the people would return from meeting and spend a considerable time in irrepressible laughter at the strange mistakes which had been made and the absurdities which had been advanced.

In the neighbourhood of my father's residence we had just erected a meeting-house and settled a minister, when my father was induced to remove again into the wilderness skirting the southern shore of Lake Ontario, a little south of Sackett's Harbour. Here again I lived for several years, enjoying no better religious privileges than I had in Oneida county.

When about twenty years old I returned to Connecticut, and from thence went to New Jersey, near New York city, and engaged in teaching. Afterwards I entered as a law student the office of Squire W——, at Adams, in that county. This was in 1818.

Up to this time I had never enjoyed what might be called religious privileges. When I was teaching school in New Jersey, the preaching in the neighbourhood was chiefly in German. I do not think I heard half a dozen sermons in English during my whole stay in New Jersey, which was about three years.

Thus, when I went to Adams to study law, I was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. I had been brought up mostly in the woods. I had very little regard to the Sabbath, and had no definite knowledge of religious truth.

I had never, until this time, lived where I could attend a stated prayer-meeting. As one was held by the church near our office every week, I used to attend and listen to the prayers, as often as I could be excused from business at that hour.

In studying elementary law, I found the old authors frequently quoting the Scriptures, and referring especially to the Mosaic Institutes, as authority for many of the great principles of common law. This excited my curiosity so much that I went and purchased a Bible, the first I had ever owned ; and whenever I found a reference by the law authors to the Bible, I turned to the passage and consulted it in its connection. This soon led to my taking a new interest in the Bible, and I read and meditated on it much more than I had ever done before in my life. However, much I did not understand.

Mr. Gale (the Presbyterian minister) was in the habit of dropping in at our office frequently, and seemed anxious to know what impression his sermons had made on my mind. I used to converse with him freely : and I now think that I sometimes criticized his sermons unmercifully. I raised such objections against his positions as forced themselves upon my attention.

We had a great many interesting conversations ; but they seemed rather to stimulate my own mind to inquiry, than to satisfy me in respect to the truth.

But as I read my Bible and attended the prayer-meetings, heard Mr. Gale preach, and conversed with him, with the elders of the church, and with others from time to time, I became very restless. A little consideration convinced me that I was by no means in a state of mind to go to heaven if I should die. It seemed to me that there must be something in religion that was of infinite importance ; and it was soon settled with me, that if the soul was immortal I needed a great change in my inward state to be prepared for happiness in heaven. But still my mind was not made up as to the

truth or falsehood of the Gospel and of the Christian religion. The question, however, was of too much importance to allow me to rest in any uncertainty on the subject.

I was particularly struck with the fact that the prayers that I had listened to, from week to week, were not, that I could see, answered. Indeed, I understood from their utterances in prayer, and from other remarks in their meetings, that those who offered them did not regard them as answered.

When I read my Bible I learned what Christ had said in regard to prayer, and answers to prayer. He had said, "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." I read also what Christ affirms, that God is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. I heard them pray continually for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and as often confess that they did not receive what they asked for.

They exhorted each other to wake up and be engaged, and to pray earnestly for a revival of religion, asserting that if they did their duty, prayed for the outpouring of the Spirit, and were in earnest, that the Spirit of God would be poured out, that they would have a revival of religion, and that the impenitent would be converted. But in their prayer and conference meetings they would continually confess, substantially, that they were making no progress in securing a revival of religion.

This inconsistency, the fact that they prayed so much and were not answered, was a sad stumbling-block to

me. I knew not what to make of it. It was a question in my mind whether I was to understand that these persons were not really Christians, and therefore did not prevail with God ; or did I misunderstand the promises and teachings of the Bible on this subject, or was I to conclude that the Bible was not true ? Here was something inexplicable to me ; and it seemed, at one time, that it would almost drive me into scepticism. It seemed to me that the teachings of the Bible did not at all accord with the facts which were before my eyes.

On one occasion, when I was in one of the prayer-meetings, I was asked if I did not desire that they should pray for me. I told them no ; because I did not see that God answered their prayers. I said, “ I suppose I need to be prayed for, for I am conscious that I am a sinner ; but I do not see that it will do any good for you to pray for me, for you are continually asking but you do not receive. You have been praying for a revival of religion ever since I have been in Adams, and yet you have it not. You have been praying for the Holy Spirit to descend upon yourselves, and yet complaining of your leanness.” I recollect having used this expression at that time : “ You have prayed enough since I have attended these meetings to have prayed the devil out of Adams, if there is any virtue in your prayers. But here you are praying on, and complaining still.” I was quite in earnest in what I said, and not a little irritable, I think, in consequence of my being brought so continually face to face with religious truth ; which was a new state of things to me.

But on farther reading of my Bible, it struck me that the reason why their prayers were not answered was because they did not comply with the revealed condi-

tions upon which God had promised to answer prayer ; that they did not pray in faith, in the sense of expecting God to give them the things that they asked for.

This thought, for some time, lay in my mind as a confused questioning, rather than in any definite form that could be stated in words. However, this relieved me, so far as queries about the truth of the Gospel were concerned ; and after struggling in that way for two or three years, my mind became quite settled that whatever mystification there might be either in my own or in my pastor's mind, or in the mind of the church, the Bible was, nevertheless, the true word of God.

This being settled, I was brought face to face with the question whether I would accept Christ as presented in the Gospel, or pursue a worldly course of life. At this period, my mind, as I have since known, was so much impressed by the Holy Spirit that I could not long leave this question unsettled ; nor could I long hesitate between the two courses of life presented to me.

CHAPTER II.

CONVERSION TO CHRIST.

ON a Sabbath evening in the autumn of 1821, I made up my mind that I would settle the question of my soul's salvation at once, that if it were possible I would make my peace with God. But as I was very busy in the affairs of the office, I knew that without great firmness of purpose I should never effectually attend to the subject. I, therefore, then and there resolved, as far as possible, to avoid all business, and everything that would divert my attention, and to give myself wholly to the work of securing the salvation of my soul. I carried this resolution into execution as sternly and thoroughly as I could. I was, however, obliged to be a good deal in the office. But as the providence of God would have it, I was not much occupied either on Monday or Tuesday; and had opportunity to read my Bible and engage in prayer most of the time.

But I was very proud without knowing it. I had supposed that I had not much regard for the opinions of others, and I had been quite singular in attending prayer-meetings, and in the degree of attention that I had paid to religion, while in Adams. In this respect I had been so singular as to lead the church at times to think that I must be an anxious inquirer. But I found that I was very unwilling to have any one know that I was seeking salvation. When I prayed I would only whisper my prayer, after having stopped the key-hole to the door,

lest some one should discover that I was engaged in prayer. Before that I had my Bible lying on the table with the law-books ; and it never had occurred to me to be ashamed to be found reading it, any more than I should be ashamed of being found reading any of my other books.

But after I had addressed myself in earnest to the subject of my own salvation, I kept my Bible, as much as I could, out of sight. If I was reading it when anybody came in, I would throw my law-books upon it, to create the impression that I had not had it in my hand. Instead of being outspoken and willing to talk with anybody and everybody on the subject as before, I found myself unwilling to converse with anybody. I did not want to see my minister, because I did not want to let him know how I felt, and I had no confidence that he would understand my case, and give me the direction that I needed. For the same reasons I avoided conversation with the elders of the church, or with any of the Christian people. I was ashamed to let them know how I felt, on the one hand ; and on the other, I was afraid they would misdirect me. I felt myself shut up to the Bible.

Just at this point the whole question of Gospel salvation opened to my mind in a manner most marvellous at the time. I then saw, clearly, the reality and fulness of the atonement of Christ. I saw that His work was a finished work ; and that instead of having, or needing, any righteousness of my own to recommend me to God, I had to submit myself to the righteousness of God through Christ. Gospel salvation seemed to be an offer of something to be accepted ; and that it was full and complete ; and that all that was necessary on

my part was to get my own consent to give up my sins, and accept Christ. Salvation, instead of being a thing to be wrought out by my own works, was a thing to be found entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ, who presented Himself as my God and my Saviour.

Without being distinctly aware of it, I had stopped in the street right where the inward voice seemed to arrest me. How long I remained in that position I cannot say. But after this distinct revelation had stood for some little time before my mind, the question seemed to be put, "Will you accept it now, to-day?" I replied, "Yes; I will accept it to-day, or I will die in the attempt."

North of the village, and over a hill, lay a piece of wood, in which I was in the almost daily habit of walking, more or less, when it was pleasant weather. It was now October, and the time was past for my frequent walks. Nevertheless, instead of going to the office, I turned toward the woods, feeling that I must be away from all human eyes and ears, so that I could pour out my prayer to God.

But still my pride must show itself. As I went over the hill, it occurred to me that some one might see me and suppose that I was going away to pray; and so much was I possessed with the fear of man, that I recollect that I skulked along under the fence, till I got so far out of sight that no one in the village could see me. I then penetrated into the woods, went over on the other side of the hill, and found a place where some large trees had fallen across each other, leaving an open place between. There I saw I could make a kind of closet. I crept into this place and knelt down for prayer. As I turned to go up into the woods, I recollect

to have said, "I will give my heart to God, or I never will come down from there."

But when I attempted to pray I found that my heart would not pray. I had supposed that if I could only be where I could speak aloud, without being overheard, I could pray freely. But lo ! when I came to try, I was dumb ; at least I could say but a few words, and those without heart. I would hear a rustling in the leaves, as I thought, and would stop to look up to see if somebody were not coming.

Finally I found myself verging fast to despair. I said to myself, "I cannot pray. My heart is dead to God, and will not pray." I then reproached myself for having promised to give my heart to God before I left the woods. I began to feel deeply that it was too late ; that it must be that I was given up of God and was past hope.

Just at this moment I again thought I heard some one approach, and I opened my eyes to see whether it were so. But pride of heart, as the great difficulty in the way, was distinctly shown to me. An overwhelming sense of wickedness in being ashamed to have a human being see me on my knees before God, took such powerful possession of me that I cried at the top of my voice, and exclaimed that I would not leave that place if all the men on earth and all the devils in hell surrounded me. "What!" I said, "such a degraded sinner as I am, on my knees confessing my sins to the great and holy God ; and ashamed to have any human being, and a sinner like myself, find me on my knees endeavouring to make my peace with my offended God !" The sin appeared awful, infinite. It broke me down before the Lord.

Just at that point this passage of Scripture seemed to drop into my mind with a flood of light : "Then shall ye go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. Then shall ye seek Me and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." I instantly seized hold of this with my heart. I had intellectually believed the Bible before ; but never had the truth been in my mind that faith was a voluntary trust instead of an intellectual state. I was as conscious as I was of my existence, of trusting at that moment in God's veracity. Somehow I knew that that was a passage of Scripture, though I do not think I had ever read it. I knew that it was God's Word, and God's voice, as it were, that spoke to me. I cried to Him, " Lord, I take Thee at Thy word. Now Thou knowest that I do search for Thee with all my heart, and that I have come here to pray to Thee ; and Thou hast promised to hear me."

That seemed to settle the question that I could then, that day, perform my vow. The Spirit seemed to lay stress upon that idea in the text, "When you search for Me with all your heart."

He then gave me many other promises, both from the Old and New Testament, especially some most precious promises respecting our Lord Jesus Christ. I seized hold of them, appropriated them, and fastened upon them with the grasp of a drowning man.

I continued thus to pray, and to receive and appropriate promises for a long time, till my mind became so full that, before I was aware of it, I was on my feet and tripping up the ascent toward the road. The question of being converted had not so much as arisen to my thought ; but brushing through the leaves and bushes, I recollect saying, " If I am ever converted, I will preach the Gospel."

I soon reached the road, began to reflect upon what had passed ; and found that my mind had become most wonderfully quiet and peaceful. I said, "What is this? I must have grieved the Holy Ghost entirely away. I have lost all my conviction. I have not a particle of concern about my soul ; and it must be that the Spirit has left me." "Why !" thought I, "I never was so far from being concerned about my own salvation in my life."

Then I remembered what I had said to God while I was on my knees—that I had said I would take Him at His word ; and indeed I recollected a good many things that I had said, and concluded that it was no wonder that the Spirit had left me ; that, for such a sinner as I was to take hold of God's word in that way, was presumption if not blasphemy. I concluded that in my excitement I had grieved the Holy Spirit, and perhaps committed the unpardonable sin.

I walked quietly toward the village ; and so perfectly quiet was my mind that it seemed as if all nature listened. It was on the 10th of October, and a very pleasant day. I had gone into the woods immediately after an early breakfast : and when I returned I found it was dinner time. Yet I had been wholly unconscious of the time that had passed ; it appeared to me that I had been gone but a short time.

But how was I to account for the quiet of my mind ? I tried to recall my convictions, to get back again the load of sin under which I had been labouring. But all sense of sin, all consciousness of present sin or guilt, had departed from me. I said to myself, "What is this, that I cannot arouse any sense of guilt in my soul, as great a sinner as I am ?" I tried in vain to make

myself anxious about my present state. I was so quiet and peaceful that I tried to feel concerned about that lest it should be a result of my having grieved the Spirit away. But take any view of it I would, I could not be anxious at all about my soul, and about my spiritual state. The repose of my mind was unspeakably great. I never can describe it in words. The thought of God was sweet to my mind, and the most profound spiritual tranquillity had taken full possession of me. This was a great mystery ; but it did not distress or perplex me.

I went to my dinner, and found I had no appetite to eat. I then went to the office, and found that Squire W—— had gone to dinner. I took down my bass-viol, and, as I was accustomed to do, began to play and sing some pieces of sacred music. But as soon as I began to sing those sacred words I began to weep. After trying in vain to suppress my tears, I put up my instrument and stopped singing.

After dinner we were engaged in removing our books and furniture to another office. We were very busy in this, and had but little conversation all the afternoon. There was a great sweetness and tenderness in my thoughts and feelings. Everything appeared to be going right, and nothing seemed to ruffle or disturb me in the least.

Just before evening the thought took possession of my mind, that as soon as I was left alone in the new office I would try to pray again—that I was not going to abandon the subject of religion and give it up, at any rate ; and therefore, although I no longer had any concern about my soul, still I would continue to pray.

By evening we got the books and furniture adjusted ; and I made up, in an open fire-place, a good fire, hoping

to spend the evening alone. Just at dark Squire W——, seeing that everything was adjusted, bade me good-night and went home. I had accompanied him to the door; and as I closed the door and turned round, my heart seemed to be liquid within me. All my feelings seemed to rise and flow out; and the utterance of my heart was, "I want to pour my whole soul out to God." The rising of my soul was so great that I rushed into the room behind the front office to pray.

There was no fire and no light in the room; nevertheless it appeared as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. It did not occur to me that it was wholly a mental state; it seemed that I saw Him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at His feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed that He stood before me, and I fell down at His feet and poured out my soul to Him. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance.

I must have continued in this state for a good while; but my mind was too much absorbed to recollect anything I said. But I know, as soon as my mind became calm, I returned to the front office, and found that the fire, that I had made of large wood, was nearly burned out. But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy

Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul.

No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know, but I should say, I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, "I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me." I said, "Lord, I cannot bear any more;" yet I had no fear of death.

How long I continued in this state I do not know. But it was late in the evening when a member of my choir came to see me. He was a member of the church. He found me in this state of loud weeping, and said, "Mr. Finney, what ails you?" I could make him no answer for some time. He then said, "Are you in pain?" I gathered myself up and replied, "No, but so happy that I cannot live."

He left the office, and in a few minutes returned with one of the elders of the church. This elder was a very serious man; and in my presence had been very watchful, and I had scarcely ever seen him laugh. He asked me how I felt, and I began to tell him. Instead of saying anything, he fell into a most spasmodic laughter. It seemed as if it was impossible for him to keep from laughing from the very bottom of his heart.

There was a young man in the neighbourhood who was preparing for college, with whom I had been very intimate. Our minister, as I afterwards learned, had repeatedly talked with him on the subject of religion, and warned him against being misled by me. He informed him that I was a very careless young man about

religion ; and he thought that if he associated much with me, his mind would be diverted, and he would not be converted.

After I was converted, and this young man was converted, he told me that he had said to Mr. Gale several times, when he had admonished him about associating so much with me, that my conversations had often affected him more, religiously, than his preaching. I had, indeed, let out my feelings a good deal to this young man.

But just at this time, when I was giving an account of my feelings to this elder of the church and to the other member who was with him, this young man came into the office. I was sitting with my back toward the door, and barely observed that he came in. He listened with astonishment to what I was saying, and the first I knew he partly fell upon the floor, and cried out in the greatest agony of mind, “Do pray for me !” The elder of the church and the other member knelt down and began to pray for him ; and when they had prayed, I prayed for him myself. Soon after this they all retired and left me alone.

The question then arose in my mind, “Why did Elder B—— laugh so ? Did he not think that I was under a delusion, or crazy ?” This suggestion brought a kind of darkness over my mind ; and I began to query with myself whether it was proper for me—such a sinner as I had been—to pray for that young man. A cloud seemed to shut in over me ; I had no hold upon anything in which I could rest ; and after a little while I retired to bed, not distressed in mind, but at a loss to know what to make of my present state. Notwithstanding the baptism I had received, this temptation so obscured my

view that I went to bed without feeling sure that my peace was made with God.

When I awoke in the morning the sun had risen, and was pouring a clear light into my room. Words cannot express the impression that this sunlight made upon me. Instantly the baptism that I had received the night before, returned upon me in the same manner. I arose upon my knees in bed and wept aloud with joy, and remained for some time too much overwhelmed with the baptism of the Spirit to do anything but pour out my soul to God. It seemed as if this morning's baptism was accompanied with a gentle reproof, and the Spirit seemed to say to me, "Will you doubt?" "Will you doubt?" I cried, "No! I will not doubt; I cannot doubt." He then cleared the subject up so much to my mind that it was in fact impossible for me to doubt that the Spirit of God had taken possession of my soul.

In this state I was taught the doctrine of justification by faith, as a present experience. That doctrine had never taken any such possession of my mind, that I had ever viewed it distinctly as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. Indeed, I did not know at all what it meant in the proper sense. But I could now see and understand what was meant by the passage, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I could see that the moment I believed, while up in the woods, all sense of condemnation had entirely dropped out of my mind; and that from that moment I could not feel a sense of guilt or condemnation by any effort that I could make.) My sense of guilt was gone; my sins were gone; and I do not think I felt any more sense of guilt than if I never had sinned.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING OF HIS WORK.

THIS morning, of which I have just spoken, I went down into the office, and there I was having the renewal of these mighty waves of love and salvation flowing over me, when Squire W—— came into the office. I said a few words to him on the subject of his salvation. He looked at me with astonishment, but made no reply whatever. He dropped his head, and after standing a few minutes left the office. I thought no more of it then, but afterwards found that the remark I made pierced him like a sword ; and he did not recover from it till he was converted.

Soon after Mr. W—— had left, Deacon B—— came and said to me, “ Mr. Finney, do you recollect that my cause is to be tried at ten o’clock this morning ? I suppose you are ready ? ” I had been retained to attend this suit as his attorney. I replied to him, “ Deacon B——, I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead His cause, and I cannot plead yours.” He looked at me with astonishment, and said, “ What do you mean ? ” I told him, in a few words, that I had enlisted in the cause of Christ ; and then repeated that I had a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead His cause, and that he must go and get somebody else to attend his law-suit ; I could not do it. He dropped his head, and without making any reply, went out. A few moments later, in passing the window, I observed that

Deacon B—— was standing in the road, seemingly lost in deep meditation. He went away, and immediately settled his suit. He then betook himself to prayer, and soon got into a much higher religious state than he had ever been in before.

I soon sallied forth from the office to converse with those whom I should meet about their souls. I had the impression, which has never left my mind, that God wanted me to preach the Gospel, and that I must begin immediately. I seemed to know that the Lord commissioned me to preach the Gospel.

When I was first convicted, the thought had occurred that if I was ever converted I should be obliged to leave my profession, of which I was very fond, and preach the Gospel. This at first stumbled me. However, I at last came to the conclusion that I must submit that question to God.

But now, after receiving these baptisms of the Spirit, I was quite willing to preach the Gospel. Nay, I found that I was unwilling to do anything else. I had no disposition to make money. I had no hungering and thirsting after worldly pleasures and amusements in any direction. My whole mind was taken up with Jesus and His salvation; and the world seemed to me of very little consequence.

I spoke with many persons that day, and I believe the Spirit of God made lasting impressions upon every one of them. I cannot remember one whom I spoke with, who was not soon after converted. Just at evening I called at the house of a friend, where a young man lived who was employed in distilling whisky. The man of the house and his wife were both professors of religion. But a sister of the lady, who was present, was uncon-

verted ; and a young man, a distant relative of the family, was a professed Universalist. He was rather outspoken and talkative, and of a good deal of energy of character.

I sat down with them to tea, and they requested me to ask a blessing. It was what I had never done ; but I did not hesitate to ask the blessing of God as we sat around the table. I had scarcely more than begun before the state of these young people excited so much compassion that I burst into weeping, and was unable to proceed. Every one sat speechless for a short time, while I continued to weep. Directly the young man moved away from the table and rushed out. He fled to his room, locked himself in, and was not seen again till the next morning, when he came expressing a blessed hope in Christ. He has been for many years an able minister of the Gospel.

In the course of the day, a good deal of excitement was created in the village by its being reported what the Lord had done for my soul. At evening, without any appointment having been made, the people were going to the place where they held their conference and prayer meetings. I afterward learned that some time before this some members of the church had proposed, in a church meeting, to make me a particular subject of prayer, and that Mr. Gale had discouraged them, saying that he did not believe I would ever be converted ; that from conversing with me he had found that I was very much enlightened upon the subject of religion, and very much hardened. And furthermore, he said he was almost discouraged ; that I led the choir, and taught the young people sacred music ; and that they were so much under my influence that he did not believe that,

while I remained in Adams, they would ever be converted.

I found after I was converted that some of the wicked men in the place had hidden behind me. One man in particular, a Mr. C——, who had a pious wife, had repeatedly said to her, “If religion is true, why don’t you convert Finney? If you Christians can convert Finney, I will believe in religion.”

An old lawyer of the name of M——, living in Adams, when he heard it rumoured that day that I was converted, said that it was all a hoax, that I was simply trying to see what I could make Christian people believe.

However, with one consent the people seemed to rush to the place of worship. No one seemed ready to open the meeting, but the house was packed to its utmost capacity. I did not wait for anybody, but arose and began by saying that I then knew that religion was from God. I went on and told such parts of my experience as it seemed important to tell. Mr. C——, who had promised his wife that if I was converted he would believe in religion, was present. Mr. M——, the old lawyer, was also present. Mr. C—— got up, pressed through the crowd, and went home, leaving his hat. Mr. M—— also left and went home, saying I was crazy. “He is in earnest,” said he, “there is no mistake; but he is deranged, that is clear.”

As soon as I had done speaking, Mr. Gale, the minister, arose and made a confession. He said he believed he had been in the way of the church, and then confessed that he had discouraged the church when they had proposed to pray for me. He said also that when he had heard that day that I was converted, he

had promptly said that he did not believe it. He said he had no faith. He spoke in a very humble manner.

I had never made a prayer in public, but Mr. Gale called on me to pray. We had a wonderful meeting that evening; and, from that day, we had a meeting every evening for a long time. The work spread on every side.

As I had been a leader among the young, I immediately appointed a meeting for them, which they all attended—that is, all of the class with which I was acquainted. They were converted one after another with great rapidity, and the work continued among them until but one of their number was left unconverted.

The work spread among all classes, and extended itself, not only through the village, but out of the village in every direction. My heart was so full that for more than a week I did not feel at all inclined to sleep or eat. I went on in this way for a good many days, until I found that I must rest and sleep, or I should become insane. From that point I was more cautious in my labours, and ate regularly, and slept as much as I could.

The Word of God had wonderful power, and I was every day surprised to find that a few words spoken to an individual would stick in his heart like an arrow.

After a short time I went down to Henderson, where my father lived, and visited him. He was an unconverted man, and only one of the family, my youngest brother, had ever made a profession of religion. My father met me at the gate and said, “How do you do, Charles?” I replied, “I am well, father, body and soul. But, father, you are an old man; all your children are grown up and have left your house, and I never heard a prayer in my father’s house.” Father dropped his

head, and burst into tears, and replied, "I know it, Charles ; come in and pray yourself."

We went in and engaged in prayer. My father and mother were greatly moved, and in a very short time thereafter they were both hopefully converted. I do not know but my mother had had a secret hope before, but if so, none of the family, I believe, ever knew it.

I remained in that neighbourhood, I think, for two or three days, and conversed more or less with such people as I could meet with. They had a monthly concert of prayer in that town. There was there a Baptist church that had a minister, and a small Congregational church without a minister. The town was very much of a moral waste, however ; and at this time religion was at a very low ebb.

My youngest brother attended this monthly concert of which I have spoken, and afterward gave me an account of it. The Baptists and Congregationalists were in the habit of holding a union monthly concert. But few attended, and therefore it was held at a private house. On this occasion they met, as usual, in the parlour of a private house. A few of the members of the Baptist church and a few Congregationalists were present.

The deacon of the Congregational church was a spare, feeble old man, of the name of M——. He was quiet in his ways, and had a good reputation for piety, but seldom said much upon the subject. He was a good specimen of a New England deacon. He was present, and they called upon him to lead the meeting. He read a passage of Scripture according to their custom. They then sang a hymn, and Deacon M—— stood up behind his chair and led in prayer. The other persons present,

all of them professors of religion and younger people, knelt down around the room.

My brother said that Deacon M—— began as usual in his prayer, in a low, feeble voice, but soon began to wax warm and to raise his voice, which became tremulous with emotion.

In the meantime the brethren and sisters that were on their knees began to groan, and sigh, and weep, and agonize in prayer. From this meeting the work of the Lord spread forth in every direction all over the town. And thus it spread at that time from Adams as a centre, throughout nearly all the towns in the country.

I have spoken of the conviction of Squire W——, in whose office I studied law. Very soon after my conversion, several other cases of conversion occurred that were reported to have taken place under similar circumstances ; that is, persons went up in the grove to pray, and there made their peace with God.

When Squire W—— heard their experience in our meetings, he thought that he had a parlour to pray in, and that he was not going into the woods. To this, it appeared, he strongly committed himself.

I have found a great many cases of this kind, where upon some question a sinner's pride of heart would commit him. In all such cases the dispute must be yielded, or the sinner never will get into the kingdom of God. I have known persons to remain for weeks in great tribulation, pressed by the Spirit ; but they could make no progress till the point was yielded. Mr. W—— was the first case that had ever come to my notice.

After he was converted he said the question had frequently come up when he was in prayer, and that he had been made to see that it was pride that made him

take that stand, and that kept him out of the kingdom of God. But still he was not willing to admit this, even to himself. He tried in every way to make himself believe, and to make God believe, that he was not proud. One night, he said, he prayed all night in his parlour that God would have mercy on him ; but in the morning he felt more distressed than ever.

One afternoon I was sitting in our office, and two of the elders of the church with me, when the young man that I had met at the shoemaker's shop came hastily into the office, and exclaimed as he came, "Squire W—— is converted !" and proceeded to say: "I went up into the woods to pray, and heard some one over in the valley shouting very loud. I went up to the brow of the hill, where I could look down, and I saw Squire W—— pacing to and fro, and singing as loud as he could sing ; and every few moments he would stop and clap his hands with his full strength, and shout, "I will rejoice in the God of my Salvation !" While the young man was telling us this, behold Squire W—— appeared in sight coming over the hill. As he came down to the foot of the hill we observed that he met Father T——, as we all called him, an aged Methodist brother. He rushed up to him, and took him right up in his arms. After setting him down and conversing a moment, he came rapidly toward the office. When he came in he was in a profuse perspiration, and he cried out, "I've got it ! I've got it !" He then gave us an account of what had been passing in his mind, and why he had not obtained a hope before. He said as soon as he gave up that point and went into the woods, his mind was relieved ; and when he knelt down to pray, the Spirit of God came upon him and filled him with

such unspeakable joy that it resulted in the scene which the young man witnessed. Of course from that time Squire W—— took a decided stand for God.

Toward spring the older members of the church began to abate in their zeal. I had been in the habit of rising early, and spending a season of prayer alone in the meeting-house, and I finally succeeded in interesting a considerable number of brethren to meet me in the morning for a prayer meeting, and we were generally together long before it was light enough to see to read. I persuaded my minister to attend these meetings.

But soon they began to be remiss, whereupon I would get up in time to go round to their houses and wake them.

One morning I had called the brethren, and when I returned to the meeting-house few of them had got there. Mr. Gale was standing at the door, and as I came up, all at once the glory of God shone round and about me, in a manner most marvellous. The day was just beginning to dawn ; but all at once a light perfectly ineffable shone in my soul, and almost prostrated me to the ground. In this light it seemed as if I could see that all nature praised and worshipped God except man. It was too intense for the eyes. I recollect breaking into a flood of tears, in view of the fact that mankind did not praise God. I think I knew something then, by actual experience, of that light that prostrated Paul on his way to Damascus. It was surely a light such as I could not have endured long.

When I burst out into loud weeping, Mr. Gale said, “What is the matter, brother Finney?” I could not tell him. I found that he had seen no light, and that he saw no reason why I should be in such a state of

mind.) I therefore said but little. I merely replied, that I saw the glory of God, and that I could not endure to think of the manner in which He was treated by men ; indeed, it did not seem to me at the time that the vision of His glory which I had was to be described in words. I wept it out ; and the vision, if it may be so called, passed away and left my mind calm.

I used to have, when I was a young Christian, many seasons of communing with God which cannot be described in words, and not unfrequently those seasons would end in an impression on my mind like this : “ Go, see that thou tell no man.” I did not understand this at the time, and several times I paid no attention to this injunction, but tried to tell my Christian brethren what communications the Lord had made to me, or rather what seasons of communion I had with Him. But I soon found that it would not do to tell my brethren what was passing between the Lord and my soul. They could not understand it.

Sometimes I would pursue a wrong course in fasting and attempt to examine myself according to the ideas of self-examination then entertained by my minister and the church. I would try to look into my own heart, in the sense of examining my feelings, and would turn my attention particularly to my motives and the state of my mind. When I pursued this course, I found invariably that the day would close without any perceptible advance being made. Afterwards I saw clearly why this was so. Turning my attention, as I did, from the Lord Jesus Christ, and looking into myself, examining my motives and feelings, my feelings all subsided of course ; but whenever I fasted, and let the Spirit take His own course with me, and gave myself up to let Him

lead and instruct me, I universally found it in the highest degree useful. I found I could not live without enjoying the presence of God; and if at any time a cloud came over me, I could not rest, I could not study, I could not attend to anything with the least satisfaction or benefit, until the medium was again cleared between my soul and God.

The Lord taught me, in those early days of Christian experience, many very important truths in regard to the spirit of prayer. Not long after I was converted, a woman with whom I had boarded—though I did not board with her at this time—was taken very sick. She was not a Christian, but her husband was a professor of religion. He came into our office one evening, being a brother of Squire W——, and said to me, “My wife cannot live through the night.” This seemed to plant an arrow, as it were, in my heart. It came upon me in the sense of a burden, but with it came an intense desire to pray for that woman. I left the office almost immediately, and went up to the meeting-house; there I struggled, but could not say much.

I stayed a considerable time in the church in this state of mind, but got no relief. I returned to the office, but I could not sit still; I could only walk the room and agonize. I returned to the meeting-house, and went through the same process of struggling. For a long time I tried to get my prayer before the Lord, but somehow words could not express it; I could only groan and weep. I returned to the office again, and still found I was unable to rest, and I returned a third time to the meeting-house. At this time the Lord gave me power to prevail. I obtained the assurance that the woman would not die, and indeed that she would never die in her sins.

I returned to the office. My mind was perfectly quiet; and I soon left and retired to rest. Early the next morning the husband of this woman came. I inquired how his wife was. He, smiling, said, "She's alive, and to all appearance better this morning." I replied, "Brother W——, she will not die with this sickness; you may rely upon it. And she will never die in her sins." She did recover, and soon after obtained a hope in Christ.

At first I did not understand what this exercise of mind that I passed through was. But shortly after, in relating it to a Christian brother, he said to me, "Why, that was the travail of your soul." A few minutes' conversation, and pointing me to certain Scriptures, gave me to understand what it was.

Another experience which I had soon after this illustrates the same truth. I have spoken of one young woman as belonging to the class of young people who remained unconverted. This attracted a good deal of attention; and there was considerable conversation among Christians about her case. She was naturally a charming girl, and very much enlightened on the subject of religion, but she remained in her sins.

One of the elders of the church and myself agreed to make her a daily subject of prayer, to continue to present her case at the throne of grace, morning, noon, and evening, (until she was either converted, or should die, or we should be unable to keep our covenant) I soon found, however, that the elder who had entered into this arrangement with me was losing his spirit of prayer. But this did not discourage me. I continued to hold on with increasing importunity. I also availed myself of every opportunity to converse plainly and searchingly with her on the subject of her salvation.

After I had continued in this way for some time, one evening I called just as the sun was setting. As I came up to the door I heard a shriek and confusion inside ; and stood and waited for the confusion to be over. The lady of the house soon came, and held in her hand a portion of a book, which had evidently been torn in two. She was pale and very much agitated, and said, “ Mr. Finney, don't you think my sister has become a Universalist ? ” The book was a defence of Universalism. Her sister had detected her reading it in a private way.

She tried to get it away ; and it was the struggle to obtain that book which I had heard.

I received this information at the door ; whereupon I declined to go in. It struck me very much in the same way as the announcement that the sick woman was about to die. As I returned to my room, at some distance from that house, I felt almost as if I should stagger under the burden that was on my mind ; and I struggled, and groaned, and agonized, but could not frame to present the case before God in words, but only in groans and tears.

The discovery that that young woman, instead of being converted, was becoming a Universalist, so astounded me that I could not break through with my faith, and (get hold of God) in reference to her case. There seemed to be a darkness hanging over the question, as if a cloud had risen up between me and God, in regard to prevailing for her salvation.

However, I was obliged to retire that night without having prevailed. But as soon as it was light I awoke ; and the first thought that I had was to beseech the God of grace again for that young woman. No sooner was

I upon my knees than the darkness gave way, and the whole subject opened to my mind ; and as soon as I pleaded for her God said to me, " Yes ! yes !" If He had spoken with an audible voice, it would not have been more distinctly understood than this word spoken within my soul. It instantly relieved all my solicitude. My mind became filled with the greatest peace and joy ; and I felt a complete certainty that her salvation was secure.

Soon after I was converted, the man with whom I had been boarding, a magistrate, and one of the principal men in the place, was deeply convicted of sin. He had been elected member of the Legislature of the State. I was praying daily for him, and urging him to give his heart to God. His conviction became very deep ; but still from day to day he deferred submission, and did not obtain a hope. My solicitude for him increased.

One afternoon several of his political friends had a protracted interview with him. On the evening of the same day I attempted again to carry his case to God. I do not remember ever to have been in more intimate communion with the Lord Jesus than I was at that time. I was bathed in tears of joy, and gratitude, and love ; and in this state of mind I attempted to pray for this friend. But the moment I did so my mouth was shut. The Lord seemed to say unto me, " No ; I will not hear." An anguish seized upon me : I thought at first it was a temptation.

The next morning I saw him ; and as soon as I brought up the question of submission to God, he said : " Mr. Finney, I shall have nothing more to do with it until I return from the Legislature. I stand committed to my political friends to carry out certain measures in the

Legislature, that are incompatible with my first becoming a Christian ; and I have promised that I will not attend to the subject until after I have returned from Albany."

From the moment of that exercise the evening before, I had no spirit of prayer for him at all. As soon as he told me what he had done, I understood it. I could see that his convictions were all gone, and that the Spirit of God had left him.

When the time arrived he went to the Legislature; and in the spring he returned an almost insane Universalist. I say almost insane, because, instead of having formed his own opinions from any evidence or course of argument, he said, "I have come to that conclusion, not because I have found it taught in the Bible, but because such a doctrine is so opposed to the carnal mind. It is a doctrine so generally rejected and spoken against, as to prove that it is distasteful to the carnal, unconverted mind." This was astonishing. But everything else that I could get out of him was as wild and absurd as this. He remained in his sins, finally fell into decay, and died at last, as I have been told, a dilapidated man. and in the full faith of his Universalism.

CHAPTER IV.

STARTING TO PREACH.

IN the spring of the year the older members of the church began manifestly to decline in their engagedness and zeal for God. This greatly oppressed me, as it did also the young converts generally. About this time I read in a newspaper an article, "A revival revived." The substance was, that in a certain place there had been a revival during the winter ; that in the spring it declined ; and that upon earnest prayer being offered for the continued out-pouring of the Spirit, the revival was powerfully revived.

I was at that time boarding with Mr. Gale, and I took the article to him. I was so overcome with a sense of the Divine goodness in hearing and answering prayer, and with a felt assurance that He would hear and answer prayer for the revival of His work in Adams, that I went through the house weeping aloud like a child. Mr. Gale seemed surprised at my feelings, and my expressed confidence that God would revive His work. The article made no such impression on him.

At the next meeting of the young people, I proposed that we should observe a closet concert of prayer for the revival of God's work ; that we should pray at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset, in our closets, and continue this for one week, when we should come together again, and see what further was to be done. No other means were used ; but the spirit of prayer was poured out wonder-

fully upon the young converts. Before the week was out I learned that some of them, when they would attempt to observe this season of prayer, would lose all their strength and be unable to rise to their feet, or even stand upon their knees in their closets ; and that some would lie prostrate on the floor, and pray for the outpouring of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit was poured out, and before the week ended all the meetings were thronged ; and there was as much interest in religion as there had been at any time during the revival.

And here a mistake was made, or, perhaps, a sin committed, by some of the older members of the church, which resulted in great evil. As I afterwards learnt, a considerable number of the older people resisted this new movement among the young converts. They were jealous of it ; and felt that the young were getting out of their place in being so forward and so urgent upon the older members. This state of mind finally grieved the Spirit of God. It was not long before alienations began to arise among these older members, which finally resulted in great evil to those who had allowed themselves to resist this revival.

In the spring of 1822, I put myself under the care of the Presbytery as a candidate for the Gospel ministry. Some of the ministers urged me to go to Princeton to study theology, but I declined. I told them that my pecuniary circumstances forbade it ; but they said they would see that my expenses were paid. Still I refused to go ; and when urged to give reasons, I plainly told them that I would not put myself under such an influence as they had been under ; that I was confident they had been wrongly educated, and they were not

ministers that met my ideal of what a minister of Christ should be.

There was but one member of the church to whom I opened my mind freely, and that was Elder H——, a very godly man. He held pretty strongly the higher doctrines of Calvinism. Nevertheless, he became satisfied that I was right, and he would call on me frequently to have seasons of prayer with me, to strengthen me in my studies.

Several times he fell in with me when I was in a state of great depression. He would go with me to my room, and sometimes we would continue till a late hour crying to God for light, strength, and faith, to accept and do His perfect will. He lived more than three miles from the village, and frequently he has stayed till ten or eleven o'clock at night, and then walked home.

After I got into the ministry, and great opposition was raised to my preaching, I met Elder H——, and he alluded to the opposition, and said, "O ! my soul is so burdened that I pray for you day and night. But I am sure that God will help. Go on, go on, brother Finney ; the Lord will give you deliverance."

At a meeting of the Presbytery, about this time, I first saw the Rev. Daniel Nash, who is generally known as Father Nash, a member of the Presbytery. A large congregation was assembled to hear my examination. I got in a little late, and saw a man standing in the pulpit speaking to the people, as I supposed. He looked at me, I observed, as I came in ; and was looking at others as they passed up the aisles.

As soon as I reached my seat and listened, I observed that he was praying. I was surprised to see him looking all over the house, as if he were talking to the people ;

while, in fact, he was praying to God. Of course it did not sound to me much like prayer ; and he was at that time indeed in a very cold and backslidden state. I shall have occasion frequently to mention him hereafter.

Having had no regular training for the ministry, I did not expect or desire to labour in large towns or cities, or minister to cultivated congregations. I intended to go into the new settlements and preach in school-houses, and barns, and groves. Accordingly, soon after being licensed to preach, for the sake of being introduced to the region where I proposed to labour, I took a commission for six months, from a Female Missionary Society located in Oneida. I went into the northern part of Jefferson county, and began my labours at Evans's Mills, in the town of Le Ray.

I found two churches, a small Congregational Church without, and a Baptist Church with a minister. I presented my credentials ; they were very glad to see me, and I soon began my labours. They had no meeting-house ; but the two churches worshipped alternately in a school-house, large enough to accommodate all the children in the village. The Baptists occupied the house one Sabbath, and the Congregationalists the next ; so that I could have the house every other Sabbath, but could use it on any evening as often as I pleased. I therefore divided my Sabbaths between Evans's Mills and Antwerp, a village some sixteen or eighteen miles still further north.

I will relate first some facts that occurred at Evans's Mills during that season ; and then give a brief narrative of the occurrences at Antwerp. But as I preached alternately in these two places, these facts were occurring from week to week in one or the other of these localities.

I began to preach in the stone school-house at Evans's Mills; the people were very much interested, and thronged the place. They extolled my preaching; and the Congregational Church became hopeful that they should be built up, and that there would be a revival. More or less convictions occurred under every sermon; but still no general conviction appeared upon the public mind.

I was very dissatisfied with this state of things; and at one of my evening services, after having preached there two or three Sabbaths, and several evenings in the week, I told the people that I had come there to secure the salvation of their souls: that my preaching, I knew, was highly complimented by them; but that, after all, I did not come there to please them, but to bring them to repentance; that it mattered not to me how well they were pleased with my preaching, if after all they rejected my Master; that something was wrong, either in me or in them; that the kind of interest they manifested was doing them no good; and that I could not spend time with them unless they were going to receive the Gospel. I then, quoting the words of Abraham's servant, said, "Now, will you deal kindly and truly with my Master? If you will, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." I turned this question over, and pressed it upon them, and insisted upon it that I must know what course they proposed to pursue. If they did not purpose to become Christians and enlist in the service of the Saviour, I wanted to know, that I might not labour with them in vain. I said, "You admit that what I preach is the Gospel. You profess to believe. Now will you receive it? Do you mean to receive it, or do you intend to reject it? You must have some mind about it. And now I have a right to take it for granted,

inasmuch that you admit that I have preached the truth, that you acknowledge your obligation at once to become Christians. This obligation you do not deny ; but will you meet the obligation ? Will you discharge it ? Will you do what you admit you ought to do ? If you will not, tell me ; and if you will, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

After turning this over till I saw they understood well, and looked greatly surprised at my manner, I then said, "Now, I must know your minds, and I want that you who have made up your minds to become Christians, and will give your pledge to make your peace with God immediately, should rise ; but that, on the contrary, those of you who are resolved that you will not become Christians, and wish me so to understand, and wish Christ so to understand, should sit still." After making this plain, so that I knew that they understood, I said : "You who are now willing to pledge to me and to Christ that you will immediately make your peace with God, please rise. On the contrary, you that mean that I should understand that you are committed to remain in your present attitude, not to accept Christ—those of you that are of this mind, may sit still." They looked at one another and at me, and all sat still, just as I expected.

After looking around for a few moments, I said, "Then you are committed. You have taken your stand. You have rejected Christ and His Gospel ; and ye are witnesses one against the other, and God is witness against you all. This is explicit, and you may remember, as long as you live, that you have thus publicly committed yourselves against the Saviour, and said, ' We will not have this man, Christ Jesus, to reign over

us.'” This is the purport of what I urged upon them, and as nearly in these words as I can recollect.

When I thus pressed them they began to look angry, and arose, *en masse*, and started for the door. When they began to move, I paused. As soon as I stopped speaking they turned to see why I did not go on. I said, “I am sorry for you ; and will preach to you once more, the Lord willing, to-morrow night.”

They all left the house except Deacon McC——, who was a deacon of the Baptist Church. I saw that the Congregationalists were confounded. They were few in number and weak in faith. I presume that every member of both churches who were present, except Deacon McC——, was taken aback, and concluded that the matter was all over ;—that by my imprudence I had dashed and ruined all hopeful appearances. Deacon McC—— came up and took me by the hand and, smiling, said, “Brother Finney, you have got them. They cannot rest under this, rely upon it. The brethren are all discouraged,” said he ; “but I am not. I believe you have done the very thing that needed to be done, and that we shall see the results.” I thought so myself, of course. I intended to place them in a position which, upon reflection, would make them tremble in view of what they had done. But for that evening and the next day they were full of wrath. Deacon McC—— and myself agreed upon the spot to spend the next day in fasting and prayer—separately in the morning, and together in the afternoon. I learned in the course of the day that the people were threatening me—to ride me on a rail, to tar and feather me, and to give me a walking paper, as they said. Some of them cursed me ; and said that I had put them under oath, and made them

swear that they would not serve God ; that I had drawn them into a solemn and public pledge to reject Christ and His Gospel. This was no more than I expected. In the afternoon Deacon McC—— and I went into a grove together, and spent the whole afternoon in prayer. Just at evening the Lord gave us great enlargement, and promise of victory. Both of us felt assured that we had prevailed with God ; and that, that night, the power of God would be revealed among the people.

As the time came for meeting, we left the woods and went to the village. The people were already thronging to the place of worship ; and those that had not already gone, seeing us go through the village, turned out of their stores and places of business, or threw down their ball clubs where they were playing upon the green, and packed the house to its utmost capacity.

I had not taken a thought with regard to what I should preach. The Holy Spirit was upon me, and I felt confident that when the time came for action I should know. As soon as I found the house packed I arose and, without any formal introduction of singing, opened upon them with these words : “ Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him ; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked ! it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” The Spirit of God came upon me with such power that it was like opening a battery upon them. For more than an hour the word of God came through me to them in a manner that I could see was carrying all before it. It was a fire and a hammer breaking the rock ; and as the sword that was piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. I saw that a general conviction was spreading over the whole congregation.

(Being then afraid of excitement Mr. F—— dismissed meeting !!!)

As the people withdrew, I observed a woman in the arms of some of her friends, who were supporting her, in one part of the house; and I went to see what was the matter, supposing that she was in a fainting fit. But I soon found that she was not fainting, but that she could not speak. There was a look of the greatest anguish in her face. I advised the women to take her home, and pray with her, and see what the Lord would do. They informed me that this Miss G—— was a member of the church in good standing, and had been for several years.

Instead of going to my usual lodgings, I accepted an invitation, and went home with a family where I had not before stopped over night. Early in the morning I found that I had been sent for to the place where I was supposed to be, several times, to visit families where there were persons under awful distress of mind. This led me to sally forth among the people; and everywhere I found a state of wonderful conviction of sin and alarm for their souls.

After lying in a speechless state about sixteen hours, Miss G——'s mouth was opened, and a new song was given her. She was taken from the horrible pit of miry clay, and her feet were set upon a rock; and it was true that many saw it and feared. It occasioned a great searching among the members of the church. She declared that she had been entirely deceived; that for eight years she had been a member of the church, and thought she was a Christian, but, during the sermon the night before, she saw that she had never known the true God; and when His character arose before her mind as it was then presented, her hope "perished like a moth."

She said, such a view of the holiness of God was presented, that like a great wave it swept her away from her standing, and annihilated her hope in a moment.

I found a number of deists; some of them men of high standing in the community. One of them was a keeper of an hotel in the village; and others were respectable men, and of more than average intelligence. But they seemed banded together to resist the revival. When I ascertained exactly the ground they took, I preached a sermon to meet their wants; for on the Sabbath they would attend my preaching. I took for my text: "Suffer me a little, and I will show you that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will bring my knowledge from afar, and I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." I went over the whole ground, so far as I understood their position; and God enabled me to sweep it clean. As soon as I had finished and dismissed the meeting, the hotel keeper, who was the leader among them, came to me, and taking me by the hand, said, "Mr. Finney, I am convinced. You have met and answered all my difficulties. Now I want you to go home with me, for I want to converse with you." I heard no more of their infidelity; and, if I remember, that class of men were nearly, or quite, all converted.

There was one old man who was not only an infidel, but a great railer at religion. He was very angry at the revival. I heard every day of his blaspheming, but took no public notice of it. He refused altogether to attend meeting, but in the midst of his opposition he suddenly fell out of his chair in a fit of apoplexy. A physician was immediately called, who told him that he could live but a very short time; and that if he had anything to say, he must say it at once. He had just strength and

time to stammer out, "Don't let Finney pray over my corpse." This was the last of his opposition.

During the revival my attention was called to a sick woman in the community, who had been a member of a Baptist Church, and was well known ; but people had no confidence in her piety, She was fast failing, and they begged me to call and see her. I went, and had a long conversation with her. She told me a dream which she had when she was a girl, which made her think that her sins were forgiven. Upon that she had settled down, and no argument could move her. I tried to persuade her that there was no evidence of conversion in that dream. I told her plainly that her acquaintances affirmed that she had never lived a Christian life and had never evinced a Christian temper ; and I had come to try to persuade her to give up her false hope, and see if she would not now accept Jesus Christ that she might be saved. I dealt with her as kindly as I could, but did not fail to make her understand what I meant. But she took great offence ; and after I went away complained that I tried to get away her hope, and distress her mind ; that I was cruel to try to distress a woman as sick as she was in that way—to try to disturb the repose of her mind. She died not long afterwards.

While at this place, one afternoon, a Christian brother called and wished me to visit his sister, who was fast failing with consumption, and was a Universalist. Her husband, he said, had led her into Universalism. He said he had not asked me to go and see her when her husband was at home, because he feared that he would abuse me, as he was determined that his wife's mind should not be disturbed on the question of universal salvation. I went, and found her not at all at rest in

her views of Universalism ; and during conversation she gave up those views entirely, and appeared to embrace the Gospel. I believe she held fast to hope in Christ till she died.

At evening her husband returned, and learned from herself what had taken place. Greatly enraged, he swore he would "kill Finney." As I learned afterwards, he armed himself with a pistol, and that night went to meeting, where I was to preach. Of this, however, I knew nothing at the time. The meeting was in a school-house of the village. The house was packed. I went on to preach with all my might ; and in the midst of my discourse saw a powerful-looking man, in the middle of the house, fall from his seat. As he sunk he groaned, and then cried that he was sinking to hell. He repeated that several times. The people knew who he was, but he was a stranger to me. I think I had never seen him before. Of course this created a great excitement. It broke up my preaching ; and so great was his anguish that we spent the rest of our time in praying for him. When the meeting was dismissed his friends helped him home. The next morning I inquired for him, and found that he had spent a sleepless night, in great anguish of mind, and that at early dawn he had gone forth, they knew not whither. He was not heard of till about ten o'clock in the morning. I was passing up the street, and saw him coming apparently from a grove at some distance from the village. He was on the opposite side of the street, and coming toward me. When he recognised me, he came across to meet me, when I saw that his countenance was all in a glow. I said, "Good morning, Mr. C——." "Good morning," he replied. "And," said I, "how do you feel

in your mind this morning?" "Oh, I do not know," he replied; "I have had an awfully distressed night. But I could not pray there in the house; and I thought if I could get alone, where I could pour out my voice with my heart, I could pray. In the morning I went into the woods; but when I got there I found I could not pray. I thought I could give myself to God, but I could not. I tried, and tried, till I was discouraged. Finally I saw that it was of no use, and I told the Lord that I found myself condemned and lost; that I had no heart to pray to Him, and no heart to repent; that I found I had hardened myself so much that I could not give my heart to Him, and therefore I must leave the whole question to Him. I was at His disposal, and could not object to His doing with me just as it seemed good in His eyes, for I had no claim to His favour at all. I left the question of my salvation or damnation wholly with the Lord. "Well, what followed?" I inquired. "Why," said he, "I found I had lost all my conviction. I got up and came away, and my mind was so still and quiet that I found the Spirit of God was grieved away, and I had lost my conviction. "But," said he, "when I saw you my heart began to burn and grow hot within me; and instead of feeling as if I wanted to avoid you, I felt so drawn that I came across the street to see you." But I should have said that when he came near me, he leaped, and took me right up in his arms, and turned round once or twice, and then set me down. This preceded the conversation that I have just related. After a little further conversation I left him. He soon came into a state of mind that led him to indulge a hope. We heard no more of his opposition.

At this place I again saw Father Nash, the man who prayed with his eyes opened when I was licensed. After he was at Presbytery he was taken with inflamed eyes, and for several weeks was shut up in a dark room. He could neither read nor write, and gave himself up almost entirely to prayer. He had a terrible overhauling in his whole Christian experience ; and as soon as he was able to see, with a double black veil before his face, he sallied forth to labour for souls.

When he came to Evans's Mills he was full of the power of prayer. He was another man from what he had been at any former period. I found that he had "a praying list" of the names of persons whom he had made subjects of prayer every day, and sometimes many times a day.

There was a man of the name of D——, who kept a low tavern in the village, the resort of all the opposers of the revival. The bar-room was a place of blasphemy, and he was himself a most profane, abusive man. He went railing about the streets respecting the revival, and would take particular pains to swear and blaspheme whenever he saw a Christian. One of the young converts lived almost across the way, and he told me that he meant to sell and move out of that neighbourhood, because every time he was out of doors and D —— saw him, he would come out and swear, and curse, and say everything he could to wound his feelings. He had not, I think, been at any of our meetings.

Father Nash heard us speak of this Mr. D—— as "a hard case," and immediately put his name upon his prayer list. He remained in town a day or two, and went on his way, having in view another field of labour.

Not many days afterwards, as we were holding an evening meeting, a very crowded house, who should come in but this notorious D——! His entrance created a considerable movement in the congregation; people feared that he had come in to make a disturbance. The fear and abhorrence of him had become very general; so that when he came in, some got up and retired. I knew his countenance, and kept my eye upon him. I very soon became satisfied that he had not come to oppose, and that he was in great anguish of mind. He sat and writhed upon his seat. He soon arose, and tremblingly asked me if he might say a few words. I told him that he might. He then proceeded to make one of the most heart-broken confessions that I ever heard. His confession seemed to cover the whole ground of his treatment of God, and of his treatment of Christians, and of the revival, and of everything good.

This thoroughly broke up the fallow ground in many hearts. It was the most powerful means that could have been used, just then, to give an impetus to the work. D—— soon came out and professed a hope, abolished all the revelry and profanity of his bar-room; and from that time, as long as I stayed there, and I know not how much longer, a prayer-meeting was held in his bar-room nearly every night.

CHAPTER V.

REVIVAL AT EVANS'S MILLS, AND ITS RESULTS.

A LITTLE way from the village of Evans's Mills was a settlement of Germans, where there was a German church, with several elders and a considerable membership, but no minister, and no regular religious meetings. Once each year they were in the habit of having a minister come from the Mohawk Valley, to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. He would catechize their children, and receive such of them as had made the required attainments in knowledge. This was the way in which they were made Christians. They were required to commit to memory the Catechism, and to be able to answer certain doctrinal questions ; whereupon they were admitted to full communion in the church. After receiving the communion they took it for granted that they were Christians, and that all was safe.

But mingling, as they did more or less, in the scenes that passed in the village, they requested me to go out there and preach. I consented ; and the first time took this text : " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

The settlement turned out *en masse* ; and the school-house was filled to its utmost capacity. They could understand English well. I began by showing what holiness is not. Under this head I took everything that they considered to be religion, and showed that it was not holiness at all. In the second place I showed what

holiness is I then showed, thirdly, what is intended by seeing the Lord ; and then, why those that had no holiness could never see the Lord—why they could never be admitted to His presence, and be accepted of Him. I then concluded with such pointed remarks as were intended to make the subject go home. And it did go home by the power of the Holy Ghost. The sword of the Lord slew them on the right hand and on the left.

In a very few days the whole settlement was under conviction ; elders of the church and all were in the greatest consternation, feeling that they had no holiness. At their request I appointed a meeting for inquiry, to give instructions to inquirers. This was in their harvest time. I held the meeting at one o'clock in the afternoon, and found the house literally packed. People had thrown down the implements with which they were gathering their harvest, and had come into the meeting.

I took a position in the centre of the house, as I could not move round among them ; and asked them questions, and encouraged them to ask questions. They became interested, and were free in asking questions, and in answering questions which I asked.

One woman came in late, and sat near the door. When I came to speak to her, I said, "You look unwell." "Yes," she replied, "I am very sick, I have been in bed until I came to meeting. But I cannot read ; and I wanted to hear God's word so much that I got up and came to meeting." "How did you come ?" I inquired. She replied, "I came on foot." "How far is it ?" was the next inquiry. "We call it three miles." I found that she was under conviction of sin, and had a most remarkably clear apprehension of her character and position before God. She was soon after converted,

and a remarkable convert she was. My wife said that she was one of the most remarkable women in prayer that she ever heard.

I addressed a tall, dignified-looking woman, and asked what was the state of her mind. She replied immediately that she had given her heart to God ; and went on to say that the Lord had taught her to read since she had learnt to pray. I asked what she meant. She said she never could read, and never had known her letters. But when she gave her heart to God she was greatly distressed that she could not read God's word. " But I thought," she said, " that Jesus could teach me to read ; and I asked Him if He would not please to teach me to read His word. I thought when I had prayed that I could read. The children have a Testament, and I went and got it ; and I thought I could read what I had heard them read. But I went over to the school ma'am, and asked her if I read right, and she said I did, and since then I can read the word of God for myself."

I said no more, but thought that there must be some mistake about this, as the woman appeared to be quite in earnest, and quite intelligent in what she said. I took pains afterwards to inquire of her neighbours about her. They gave her an excellent character, and they all affirmed that it had been notorious that she could not read a syllable until after she was converted. I leave this to speak for itself ; there is no use in theorizing. Such, I think, were the undoubted facts.

But the revival among the Germans resulted in the conversion of the whole church, and of nearly the whole community of Germans.

While I was labouring at this place, the presbytery were called together to ordain me, which they did. Both

churches were so strengthened, and their numbers so greatly increased, that they soon went forward and built each of them a commodious stone meeting-house, and I believe have had a healthy state of religion there since that time.

I have only narrated some of the principal facts connected with this revival ; but I would further say that a wonderful spirit of prayer prevailed among Christians, and a great unity of feeling. The Congregational Church, as soon as they saw the results of the next evening's preaching, recovered themselves ; for they had been scattered, discouraged, and confounded the night before. Though a feeble and inefficient band, with one or two exceptions, still they grew in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, during that revival.

The German woman of whom I have spoken as being sick when she came to the meeting, united with the Congregational Church. A very affecting incident occurred at the time she gave a relation of her Christian experience. There was a mother in Israel of the name of S——, a very godly woman, of ripe age, and piety. We had been sitting for a long time, and hearing the narration of the experience of one after another who came forward as candidates for admission. At length this German woman arose and related her experience, one of the most touching, childlike, interesting Christian experiences that I ever listened to. I observed that old Mrs. S—— rose up, and as the house was filled, crowded her way round as best she could. I was so occupied with the woman's narrative that I was scarcely conscious of Mrs. S——'s moving. As soon as she came near to where the woman stood relating her experience, she stepped forward, and threw her arms round her neck

and burst into tears, and said, "God bless you, my dear sister! God bless you!" They wept on each other's necks. It was too moving a scene to be described in words.

The means used were simply preaching, prayer, and conference meetings, much private prayer, much personal conversation, and meetings for the instruction of earnest inquirers. These, and no other means, were used for the promotion of that work.

I have spoken of cases of intensified opposition to this revival. One circumstance, I found, had prepared the people for this opposition, and had greatly embittered it. I found that region of country what, in Western phrase, would be called "a burnt district." There had been, a few years previously, a wild excitement which they called a revival, but which turned out to be spurious. It was reported as having been a very extravagant excitement; and resulted in a reaction so extensive and profound as to leave the impression on many minds that religion was a mere delusion.

After the revival took thorough hold, opposition entirely ceased. I spent more than six months at this place and at Antwerp, labouring between the two places, and for the latter part of the time I heard nothing of open opposition.

I was obliged to take much pains in giving instruction to inquirers. The practice had been, I believe, universal to set anxious sinners to praying for a new heart, and to using means for their own conversion. The directions they received either assumed or implied that they were very willing to be Christians, and were taking much pains to persuade God to convert them. I tried to make them understand that God was using the means with

them, and not they with Him ; that God was willing, and they were unwilling ; that God was ready, and they were not ready. In short, I tried to shut them up to present faith and repentance, as the thing which God required of them, present and instant submission to His will, present and instant acceptance of Christ. I tried to show them that all delay was only an evasion of present duty ; that all praying for a new heart was only trying to throw the responsibility of their conversion upon God ; and that all efforts to do duty, while they did not give their hearts to God, were hypocritical and delusive.

During the whole six months that I laboured in that region, I rode on horseback from town to town and from settlement to settlement, and preached the Gospel as I had opportunity. When I left Adams my health had run down a good deal. I had coughed blood, and at the time I was licensed my friends thought that I could live but a short time. Mr. Gale charged me not to attempt to preach more than once a week, and then to be sure not to speak more than half an hour at a time. But instead of this, I visited, attended prayer meetings, and preached and laboured every day, and almost every night through the whole season. Before the six months were completed my health was entirely restored, and I could preach two hours, and longer, without feeling the least fatigue. I think my sermons generally averaged nearly or quite two hours. I preached out of doors, I preached in barns, I preached in school-houses, and a glorious revival spread all over that new region of country.

All through the earlier part of my ministry especially,

I used to meet from ministers a great many rebuffs and reproofs, particularly in respect to my manner of preaching. The fact is, their education had been so entirely different from mine, that they disapproved of my manner very much. They would reprove me for illustrating my ideas by reference to the common affairs of men, as I was in the habit of doing. Among farmers and mechanics, and other classes, I borrowed illustrations from their various occupations. I tried also to use such language as they would understand. I addressed them in the language of the common people.

Before I was converted I had a different tendency. In writing and speaking I had sometimes allowed myself to use ornate language. But when I came to preach the Gospel, my mind was so anxious to be thoroughly understood that I studied in the most earnest manner on the one hand to avoid what was vulgar, and on the other to express my thoughts with the greatest simplicity.

About the time that I left Evans's Mills our presbytery met, and I attended the meeting. I left the revival work at the particular request of some brethren, and went over to the presbytery. The brethren had heard of my manner of preaching—those of them who had not heard me preach. The presbytery met in the morning and went on with the transaction of business; and after our recess for dinner, as we assembled in the afternoon, the mass of the people came together and filled the house. I had not the remotest thought of what was in the minds of the presbytery. I therefore took my seat in the crowd, and waited for the meeting to be opened.

As soon as the congregation was fairly assembled, one

of the brethren arose, and said : " The people have come together manifestly to hear preaching ; and I move that Mr. Finney preach a sermon." This was seconded, and unanimously carried. I saw in a moment that it was the design of the brethren to put me on trial, that they might see if I could do as they had heard that I did—get up and preach on the spur of the moment, without any previous preparation. I made no apology or objection to preaching, for I must say that my heart was full of it, and that I wanted to preach. I arose and stepped into the aisle, and looking up to the pulpit I saw that it was high up against the wall. I therefore stood in the aisle and named my text : " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The Lord helped me to preach. I walked up and down the broad aisle, and the people were evidently interested and much moved.

But after the meeting one of the brethren stepped up to me and said : " Brother Finney, if you come up our way, I should like to have you preach in some of our school districts. I should not like to have you preach in our church. But we have got school-houses in some of the districts, away from the village—I should like to have you preach in some of those." I mention this to show what their ideas were of my method of preaching. But how completely they were in the dark in regard to the results of that method of addressing people ! They used to complain that I let down the dignity of the pulpit, that I was a disgrace to the ministerial profession, that I talked like a lawyer at the bar, that I talked to the people in a colloquial manner, that I said "you," instead of preaching about sin and sinners, and saying "they," that I said "hell," and with such an emphasis

as often to shock people ; furthermore, that I urged people with such vehemence as if they might not have a moment to live ; and sometimes they complained that I blamed people too much. One doctor of divinity told me that he felt a great deal more like weeping over sinners than blaming them. I replied to him that I did not wonder, if he believed that they had a sinful nature, and that sin was entailed upon them, and they could not help it.

After I had preached some time, and the Lord had everywhere added His blessing, I used to say to ministers, whenever they contended with me about my manner, and desired me to adopt their ideas and preach as they did, that I dared not make the change. I said, "Show me a more excellent way. Show me the fruits of your ministry ; and if they so far exceed mine as to give evidence that you have found a more excellent way, I will adopt your views. But do you expect me to abandon my own views and practices, when you yourselves cannot deny that, whatever errors I may have fallen into, yet the results justify my methods ?"

They used to complain, oftentimes, that I was guilty of repetition. I would take the same thought and turn it over and over, and illustrate it in various ways. I assured them that I thought it was necessary to do so, to make myself understood, and that I could not be persuaded to relinquish this practice. Then they would say, "You will not interest the educated part of your congregation." But facts soon silenced them on this point. They found that under my preaching, judges, and lawyers, and educated men were converted by scores ; whereas under their methods such a thing seldom occurred.

CHAPTER VI.

REMARKS UPON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION.

IN what I say upon this subject I hope my brethren will not impute to me any other motive than a kind and benevolent regard for their highest usefulness. I have always taken their criticisms kindly, and given them credit for benevolent intentions. Now I am an old man, and many of the results of my views and methods are known to the public. Is it out of place to speak freely upon this subject? In reply to objections, I have sometimes told them what a judge of the supreme court remarked to me. "Ministers do not exercise good sense in addressing the people. They are afraid of repetition. They use language not well understood by the common people. Their illustrations are not taken from the pursuits of life. They write in too elevated a style, and read without repetition, and are not understood. Now, if lawyers should take such a course, they would ruin themselves and their cause. When I was at the bar I used to take it for granted, when I had before me a jury of respectable men, that I should have to repeat over my main positions about as many times as there were persons in the jury-box. I learned that unless I did so, illustrated, and repeated, and turned the main points over,—the main points of law and of evidence,—I should lose my cause. Our object in addressing a jury is to get their minds settled before they leave the jury-box ;

not to make a speech in language but partially understood by them ; not to let ourselves out in illustrations entirely above their apprehension ; not to display our oratory, and then let them go. We are set on getting a verdict. Hence we are set upon being understood."

I never entertained the least hard feeling toward my brethren for the roughness with which they often treated me. I knew that they were very anxious to have me do good, and really supposed that I should do much more good and much less evil if I should adopt their views. But I was of a different opinion.

The more experience I had, the more I saw the results of my method of preaching ; the more I conversed with all classes, high and low, educated and uneducated, the more was I confirmed in the fact that God had led me, had taught me, had given me right conceptions in regard to the best manner in winning souls. I say that God taught me, and I know it must have been so, for surely I never had obtained these notions from man. And I have often thought that I could say with perfect truth, as Paul said, that I was not taught the Gospel by man, but by the Spirit of Christ Himself. And I was taught it by the Spirit of the Lord in a manner so clear and forcible that no argument of my ministerial brethren, with which I was plied so often and so long, had the least weight with me.

One great thing above all others ministers need, and that is singleness of eye. If they have a reputation to secure and to nurse, they will do but little good. Many years ago a beloved pastor of my acquaintance left home for his health, and employed a young man, just from the seminary, to fill his pulpit while he was absent.

This young man wrote and preached as splendid sermons as he could. The pastor's wife ventured to say to him, "You are preaching over the heads of our people. They do not understand your language or your illustrations. You bring too much of your learning into the pulpit." He replied, "I am a young man. I am cultivating a style. I am aiming to prepare myself for occupying a pulpit and surrounding myself with a cultivated congregation. I cannot descend to your people. I must cultivate an elevated style." I have had my thought and my eye upon this man ever since. I am not aware that he is yet dead ; but I have never seen his name connected with any revival, amidst all the great revivals that we have had, from year to year, since that time ; and I never expect to unless his views are radically changed, and unless he addresses the people from an entirely different stand-point, and from entirely different motives.

I could name ministers who are yet alive, old men like myself, who were greatly ashamed of me when I first began to preach, because I was so undignified in the pulpit, used such common language, addressed the people with such directness, and because I aimed not at all at ornament, or at supporting the dignity of the pulpit.

A reflecting mind will feel as if it were infinitely out of place to present in the pulpit to immortal souls, hanging upon the verge of everlasting death, specimens of learning and rhetoric. They know that men do not do so on any subject where they are really in earnest. The captain of a fire company, when a city is on fire, does not read to his company an essay, or exhibit a fine specimen of rhetoric, when he shouts to them and directs

their movements. It is a question of urgency, and he intends that every word shall be understood. He is entirely in earnest with them ; and they feel that criticism would be out of place in regard to the language he uses.

So it always is when men are entirely in earnest. Their language is in point direct and simple. Their sentences are short, cogent, powerful. The appeal is made directly for action ; and hence all such discourses take effect. This is the reason why, formerly, the ignorant Methodist preachers and the earnest Baptist preachers produced so much more effect than our most learned theologians and divines. They do so now. The impassioned utterance of a common exhorter will often move a congregation far beyond anything that those splendid exhibitions of rhetoric can effect. Great sermons lead the people to praise the preacher. Good preaching leads the people to praise the Saviour.

Ministers do not like to get up and talk as best they can, and break themselves at once into the habit of talking to the people. They must preach ; and if they must preach in the common acceptation of the term, they must write. Hence, according to that view, I have never preached. Indeed, people have often said to me : " Why, you do not preach. You talk to the people." A man in London went home from one of our meetings greatly convicted. He had been a sceptic, and his wife, seeing him greatly excited, said to him, " Husband, have you been to hear Mr. Finney preach ?" He replied : " I have been to Mr. Finney's meeting. He don't preach ; he only explains what other people preach." This, in substance, I have heard over and over again. " Why !" they say, " anybody can preach as you do. You just talk

to the people. You talk as if you were as much at home as if you sat in the parlour." Others have said : "Why, it don't seem like preaching, but it seems as if Mr. Finney had taken me alone, and was conversing with me face to face."

CHAPTER VII.

AT ANTWERP AND "SODOM."

I MUST now give some account of my labours, and their result at Antwerp, a village north of Evans's Mills.

I arrived there, the first time, in April, and found that no religious services were held in the town. The land in the township belonged to a Mr. P——, a rich landholder residing in Ogdensburgh. To encourage the settlement of the township, he had built a brick meeting-house; but the people had no mind to keep up public worship, the meeting-house was locked up, and the key was in the possession of Mr. C——, who kept the village hotel.

I soon learned that there was a Presbyterian Church consisting of but few members. They had, some years before, tried to keep up a meeting at the village on the Sabbath; but one of the elders, who conducted their Sabbath meetings, lived about five miles out, and was obliged, in approaching the village, to pass through a Universalist settlement. The Universalists had broken up the village meeting, by rendering it impossible for Deacon R——, as they called him, to get through their settlement to meeting. They would even take off the wheels of his carriage; and finally they carried their opposition so far that he gave up attending meetings at the village, and all religious services were relinquished.

I found Mrs. C——, the landlady, a pious woman. There were two other pious women in the village—a Mrs. H——, the wife of a merchant, and a Mrs. R——, the

wife of a physician. It was on Friday, if I remember, that I arrived. I called on those pious women, and asked them if they would like to have a meeting. They said that they would, but they did not know that it would be possible. Mrs. H—— agreed to open her parlour if I could get anybody to attend. I went about and invited the people, and secured the attendance, I think, of some thirteen. I preached to them, and then said that if I could get the use of the village school-house, I would preach on the Sabbath. I got the consent of the trustees, and the next day an appointment was circulated around among the people for a meeting at the school-house on Sabbath morning.

In the village I heard a vast amount of profanity. I thought I had never heard so much in any place that I had ever visited. It seemed as if the men, in playing at ball upon the green, and in every business place, were all cursing and swearing, and I felt as if I had arrived upon the borders of hell. The very atmosphere seemed to be poison ; and a kind of terror took possession of me.

I gave myself to prayer on Saturday, and finally urged my petition till this answer came : "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace ; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee. For I have much people in this city." This completely relieved me of all fear. I found, however, that the Christian people there were really afraid that something serious might happen, if religious meetings were again established in that place. I spent Saturday very much in prayer, but passed around the village enough to see that the appointment that had been given out for preaching at the school-house was making quite an excitement,

On Sabbath morning I arose and left my lodgings in the hotel, and in order to get alone, where I could let out my voice as well as my heart, I went up into the woods at some distance from the village, and continued for a considerable time in prayer. However, I did not get relief; but the load upon my mind increased. I went up a third time, and then the answer came. I found that it was time for the meeting, and went immediately to the school-house. I found it packed to its utmost capacity. I had my pocket Bible in my hand, and read to them: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." The point on which my mind principally laboured was the treatment which God received in return for His love.

I saw several men there from whom I had, the day before, heard the most awful profanity. I pointed them out in the meeting, and told what they said—how they called on God to damn each other. I told them they seemed "to howl blasphemy about the streets like hell-hounds;" and it seemed to me that I had arrived "on the very verge of hell." Everybody knew that what I said was true, and they quailed under it. They did not appear offended, but the people wept about as much as I did myself. I think there were scarcely any dry eyes in the house.

In the afternoon the meeting-house was nearly as much crowded as the school-house had been in the morning. Everybody was out at meeting, and the Lord let me loose upon them in a wonderful manner. My preaching seemed to them to be something new. Indeed, it seemed to myself as if I could rain hail and love upon

them at the same time ; or, in other words, that I could rain upon them hail, in love.

The labours of the day were effectual to the conviction of the great mass of the population. From that day, appoint a meeting when and where I would, the people would throng to hear. The work immediately commenced, and went forward with great power. I preached twice in the village church on Sabbath, attended a prayer-meeting at intermission, and generally preached in a school-house at five o'clock in the afternoon.

On the third Sabbath, an aged man came to me as I was entering the pulpit, and asked if I would preach in a school-house in his neighbourhood, about three miles distant ; saying that they had never had any services there. I appointed the next day, at five o'clock in the afternoon. It was a warm day. I left my horse at the village, and thought I would walk down, so that I should have no trouble in calling on the people in the neighbourhood. However, before I reached the place, having laboured so hard on the Sabbath, I found myself much exhausted, and sat down by the way, and felt as if I could scarcely proceed. I blamed myself for not having taken my horse.

But at the appointed hour I found the school-house full, and I could only get a standing-place near the open door. I read a hymn ; and I cannot call it singing—each one bawled in his own way. My ears had been cultivated by teaching music ; and their horrible discord distressed me so much that, at first, I thought I must go out. I finally put both hands over my ears until they were through, and then I cast myself down on my knees, almost in a state of desperation, and began

to pray. The Lord opened the windows of heaven, and the spirit of prayer was poured out, and I let my whole heart out in prayer.

I had taken no thought with regard to a text ; but waited to see the congregation. I arose from my knees and said : “ Up, get you out of this place ; for the Lord will destroy this city.” I did not recollect where that text was ; but I told them very nearly where they would find it, and then went on to explain it. I told them that there was such a man as Abraham ; and that there was such a man as Lot ; their relations to each other ; their separating from each other on account of differences ; and that Abraham took the hill country, and Lot settled in the vale of Sodom. I then told them how exceedingly wicked Sodom became, and what abominable practices they fell into. I told them that the Lord decided to destroy Sodom ; and visited Abraham and informed Him what He was about to do ; that Abraham prayed to the Lord to spare Sodom, if He found so many righteous there ; and the Lord promised to do so for their sakes ; that then Abraham besought Him to save it for a certain less number, and the Lord said He would spare it for their sakes ; that he kept on reducing the number, until he reduced the number of righteous persons to ten ; and God promised that if He found ten righteous persons in the city He would spare it. It was found that there was but one righteous person there, and that was Lot, Abraham’s nephew. “ And the men said to Lot, Hast thou here any besides ? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place ; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen

great before the face of the Lord ; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it."

While I was relating these facts I observed the people looking as if they were angry. Many of the men, in their shirt sleeves, looked at each other and at me, as if they were ready to chastise me on the spot. I could not understand what had offended them. However, it seemed that their anger rose higher and higher as I continued. As soon as I had finished, I turned and said that I had understood that they had never had a religious meeting in that place ; and that therefore I had a right to take it for granted that they were an ungodly people. I pressed that home upon them with energy, with my heart full almost to bursting.

I had not spoken in this strain more than a quarter of an hour when an awful solemnity seemed to settle upon them ; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and cried for mercy. If I had had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them down as fast as they fell. Nearly the whole congregation were either on their knees or prostrate, I should think, in less than two minutes from the first shock that fell upon them. Every one prayed who was able to speak at all.

I was obliged to stop preaching ; for they no longer paid attention. I saw the old man who had invited me, sitting in the middle of the house, and looking around with amazement. I raised my voice to make him hear, and said, "Can't you pray?" He instantly fell upon his knees, and with a stentorian voice poured himself out to God ; but he did not at all get the attention of the people. I then spake as loud as I could, and tried to make them attend. I said, "You are not in hell yet,

and now let me direct you to Christ." For a few moments I tried to hold forth the Gospel ; but scarcely any of them paid any attention. My heart was so overflowing with joy that I could scarcely contain myself. It was with much difficulty that I refrained from shouting, and giving glory to God.

As soon as I could control my feelings I turned to a young man close to me, engaged in praying for himself, laid my hand on his shoulder, and preached in his ear Jesus. As soon as I got his attention to the cross of Christ, he believed, was calm and quiet for a minute or two, and then broke out in praying for others. I then turned to another, and took the same course with him, with the same result; and then another, and another.

In this way I kept on, until I found the time had arrived when I must leave and fulfil an appointment in the village. I told them this, and asked the old man who invited me to take charge of the meeting. But there was too much interest, and there were too many wounded souls to dismiss the meeting; and so it was held all night. In the morning there were still those that could not get away; and they were carried to a private house to make room for the school. In the afternoon they sent for me to come, as they could not break up.

When I went down the second time, I heard an explanation of the anger manifested during my sermon the day before. The place was called Sodom, but I knew it not; there was but one pious man in the place, and him they called Lot—the old man that invited me. The people supposed I had chosen my subject, and preached in that manner because they were so wicked. This was a striking coincidence, but it was altogether accidental.

I have not been in that place for many years. A few years since I was labouring in Syracuse, in the State of New York. Two gentlemen called upon me—one an elderly man, the other not quite fifty. The younger introduced the elder as Deacon W——, elder of his church: saying he had called to give a hundred dollars to Oberlin College. The elder in turn introduced the younger, saying: "This is my minister, the Rev. Mr. Cross. He was converted under your ministry." Whereupon Mr. Cross said, "Do you remember preaching in Antwerp, in the school-house, in the afternoon, and that such a scene, describing it, occurred there?" I said, "I remember it very well, and can never forget it while I remember anything." "Well," said he, "I was then but a young man, and was converted in that meeting." He has been many years a successful minister. Several of his children have obtained their education in our college at Oberlin.

Although that revival came upon them suddenly, and was of such a powerful type, the converts were sound, and the work genuine. I never heard of any disastrous reaction.

I have spoken of the Universalists having prevented Deacon R—— from attending meetings on Sabbath, in Antwerp, by taking off the wheels of his carriage. When the revival was in full strength, Deacon R—— wanted me to preach in that neighbourhood. Accordingly I made an appointment. When I arrived I found the school-house filled. I engaged in prayer, and then arose and took this text: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

I saw that Deacon R—— was very uneasy; and he

soon went and stood in the open door. As there were some boys near, I supposed that he had gone to keep the boys still ; but I afterwards learnt it was through fear. He thought that if they set upon me, he would be where he could escape. I proceeded out, and before I could get through, there was a complete upturning of the very foundations of Universalism. It was a scene that almost equalled that in Sodom. Thus the revival penetrated to every part of the town, and some of the neighbouring towns shared the blessing.

When we came to receive the converts, after a great number had been examined, and the day approached for their admission, I found that several of them had been brought up in Baptist families, and asked them if they would not prefer to be immersed. They had no choice ; but their parents would prefer to have them immersed. I told them I had no objection to immersing them, and accordingly I arranged to baptize by immersion. We went down to a stream that runs through the place ; and there I baptized a dozen or more.

When the hour for afternoon service arrived, we went to the meeting-house ; and there I baptized a great number of persons by taking water in my hand and applying it to the forehead. The administration of the ordinance was so manifestly owned and blessed of God, as to do much to satisfy the people that the mode of baptism was acceptable to Him.

Among the converts was also a considerable number whose friends were Methodists. On Saturday I learned that some were saying to the converts, “ Mr. Finney is a Presbyterian. He believes in the doctrine of election and predestination ; but he has not preached it here.

He dare not preach it, because if he should, the converts would not join his church." This determined me to preach on the doctrine of election the Sabbath morning previous to their joining the church.

While I was preaching I observed a Methodist sister, with whom I had become acquainted, weeping. I feared that I was hurting her feelings. After the close of the meeting, she remained weeping; and I said, "Sister, I hope I have not injured your feelings." "No," said she, "you have not injured my feelings, Mr. Finney; but I have committed a sin. No longer ago than last night, my husband, who is an impenitent man, was arguing this very question; and maintaining the doctrine of election. I resisted it, and told him that it was not true. And now, to-day, you have convinced me that it is true; and instead of forming any excuse for my husband, or anybody else, it is the only hope that I can have that he will be saved, or anybody else." I heard no further objection to the converts joining a church that believed in the doctrine of election.

There were many interesting cases of conversion; and two very striking cases of instantaneous recovery from insanity. As I went into meeting in the afternoon of one Sabbath, I saw several ladies in a pew, with a woman dressed in black, who seemed to be in great distress; and they were partly holding her, and preventing her from going out. As I came in, one of the ladies came and told me that the one in black was an insane woman; that she had been a Methodist, but had, as she supposed, fallen from grace; which led to despair, and finally to insanity. Her husband was intemperate, and lived several miles from the village; and had

brought her down and left her at the meeting, and had himself gone to a tavern. I said a few words to her; but she replied that she must go; that she could not hear any praying, or preaching, or singing; that hell was her portion, and she could not endure anything that made her think of heaven.

I cautioned the ladies, privately, to keep her in the seat if they could, without disturbing the meeting. I then went into the pulpit and read a hymn. As soon as the singing began she struggled hard to get out; but the ladies prevented her escape. After a few moments she became quiet; but seemed to avoid hearing or attending at all to the singing. I then prayed. I heard her struggling to get out; but before I had done she became quiet, and the congregation was still. I took my text from Hebrews: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

My object was to encourage faith, in ourselves, and in her, and in ourselves for her. When I began to pray, she at first made quite an effort to get out. But the ladies resisted, and she finally sat still, but held her head very low, and seemed determined not to attend to what I said. But as I proceeded she began gradually to raise her head, and to look at me from within her long black bonnet. She looked until she sat upright, and looked me in the face with intense earnestness. As I proceeded to urge the people to be bold in faith, to launch out, and commit themselves with confidence to God, through the atoning sacrifice of our great High Priest, all at once she uttered a loud shriek. She then cast herself almost entirely from her seat, held her head very low, and I could

see that she "trembled very exceedingly." The ladies in the pew partly supported her, and watched her with manifest prayerful sympathy. As I proceeded she began to look up again, and soon sat upright, with face wonderfully changed, indicating triumphant joy and peace. There was such a glow upon her countenance as I have never seen in any human face. Her joy was so great that she scarcely could contain herself until meeting was over; and then she soon made everybody understand around her that she was set at liberty. She glorified God, and rejoiced with amazing triumph. About two years after I met her, and found her still full of joy and peace.

The other case of recovery was that of a woman who had also fallen into despair and insanity. I was not present when she was restored; but was told that it was almost or quite instantaneous, by means of a baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Revivals of religion are sometimes accused of making people mad. The fact is, men are naturally mad on the subject of religion; and revivals rather restore them.)

During this revival we heard much of opposition from Gouverneur, a town about twelve miles further north. The wicked threatened to come and mob us. However, we paid no attention. Having received the converts, and having laboured in Antwerp, together with Evans's Mills, until the fall of the year, I sent and procured for them a young man of the name of Denning, whom they settled as pastor. I then suspended my labours at Antwerp.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN TO EVANS'S MILLS.

AT this time I was earnestly pressed to remain at Evans's Mills, and finally gave encouragement that I would abide with them, at least one year. Being engaged to marry, I went to Whitestown, Oneida county, and was married in October, 1824. My wife had made preparations for housekeeping ; and a day or two after our marriage I left her, and returned to Evans's Mills, to obtain conveyance to transport our goods to that place.

Previous to this, I had preached at Perch River, still further north-west about a dozen miles. I spent one Sabbath at Evans's Mills, and intended to return for my wife about the middle of that week ; but a messenger from Perch River came and said there had been a revival among the people ever since I preached ; and begged me to go and preach at least once more. I finally sent an appointment to be there on Tuesday night ; but found the interest so deep that I stayed and preached on Wednesday, and Thursday night.

The revival soon spread in the direction of Brownville, a considerable village several miles in a south-western direction. Finally, under the pressing invitation of the minister and church at Brownville, I went there and spent the winter, having written to my wife, that such were the circumstances that I must defer coming for her until God seemed to open the way.

I was the guest at that place of a Mr. B——, one of the elders of the church, and the most intimate and influential friend of the minister. One day, as I came down from my room, and was going out to call on some inquirers, I met Mr. B—— in the hall ; and he said, “Mr. Finney, what should you think of a man that was praying week after week for the Holy Spirit, and could get no answer ?” I replied that I should think he was praying from false motives. “But from what motives should a man pray ? If he wants to be happy, is that a false motive ?” I replied, “Satan might pray with as good a motive as that ;” and then quoted the words of the Psalmist, “Uphold me with Thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.” “See !” said I, “the Psalmist did not pray for the Holy Spirit that he might be happy, but that he might be useful, and that sinners might be converted to Christ.”

I remained out till dinner time ; and when I returned he met me, and said, “Mr. Finney, I owe you a confession. I was angry when you said that to me ; and I must confess that I hoped I should never see you again. What you said forced the conviction upon me that I never had been converted, that I never had had any higher motive than a mere selfish desire for my own happiness. I went away, after you left the house, and prayed to God to take my life. I could not endure to have it known that I had always been deceived. I have been most intimate with our minister. I have journeyed with him, and slept with him, and conversed with him, and have been more intimate with him than any other member of the church ; and yet I saw that I had

always been a deceived hypocrite. The mortification was intolerable ; and I wanted to die, and prayed the Lord to take my life." However, from that time he became a new man.

Early in spring, 1825, I left Brownville, with my horse and cutter, to go after my wife. I had been absent six months since our marriage ; and as mails then were, we had seldom been able to exchange letters. I drove some fifteen miles, and the roads were very slippery. My horse was smooth-shod, and I found I must have his shoes re-set. -I stopped at Le Rayville, a small village about three miles south of Evans's Mills. While my horse was being shod, the people ran to me to know if I would preach, at one o'clock, in the school-house.

At one o'clock the house was packed ; and while I preached, the Spirit of God came down with great power. So great and manifest was the out-pouring that, in compliance with their earnest entreaty, I concluded to spend the night there, and preach again in the evening. But the work increased more and more ; and I appointed another meeting in the morning, and I appointed another in the evening ; and soon I saw that I should not be able to go any further after my wife. I told a brother that if he would take my horse and cutter and go after my wife, I would remain. He did so ; I went on preaching, and there was a powerful revival.

While I was at Brownville, God revealed to me that He was going to pour out His Spirit at Gouverneur, and that I must go and preach. Of the place I knew nothing, except that there was so much opposition manifested to the revival in Antwerp the year before. I can never tell why the Spirit of God made that revela-

tion. But I knew then, and I have no doubt now, that it was a direct revelation to me. I had not thought of the place for months ; but in prayer the thing was all shown to me, as clear as light, that I must go and preach in Gouverneur, and that God would pour out His Spirit there.

Very soon after, I saw one of the members from Gouverneur, who was passing through Brownville. I told him what God had revealed to me ; he stared as if I was insane. But he charged him to go home and tell the brethren that they might prepare themselves for my coming, and for the out-pouring of the Lord's Spirit. From him I learned that they had no minister ; that there were two churches and two meeting-houses standing near together ; that the Baptists had a minister, that an elderly man lived there who had formerly been pastor, but had been dismissed ; and that they were having, in the Presbyterian church, no regular Sabbath services.

But now I return to Le Rayville. After labouring there a few weeks, the great mass of the inhabitants were converted ; and among the rest Judge C——, a man, in point of influence, standing head and shoulders above the people. My wife arrived ; and we accepted the invitation of Judge and Mrs. C—— to become their guests. But after a few weeks, the people urged me to go and preach in a Baptist church at Rutland, where Rutland joins Le Ray. I made an appointment to preach there. The weather had become warm, and I walked through a pine-grove, about three miles, arrived early, and found the house open, but nobody there. I was warm, and took my seat near the broad aisle, in the centre of the house. Very soon people began to come

and take their seats here and there. Soon the number increased so that they were coming continually.

Presently a young woman came in, who had two or three tall plumes in her bonnet. She was slender, tall, dignified, and decidedly handsome. I observed that she waved her head and gave a very graceful motion to her plumes. She came as it were sailing along, and up the broad aisle toward where I sat, mincing as she came, at every step, waving her great plumes most gracefully, looking around just enough to see the impression she was making. For such a place the whole thing was so peculiar that it struck me very much. She entered a pew in which nobody was sitting. Thus we were near together, but each occupying a separate pew. I turned partly round, and looked at her from head to foot. She saw that I was observing her critically, and looked a little abashed. In a low voice I said very earnestly, "Did you come here to divide the worship of God's house, to make people worship you, to get their attention away from God and His worship?" This made her writhe; and I followed her up, in a voice so low that nobody else heard, but I made her hear distinctly. She quailed under the rebuke, and could not hold up her head. She began to tremble, and when I had said enough to fasten the thought of her vanity on her mind, I arose and went into the pulpit. As soon as she saw me go into the pulpit, and that I was the minister that was about to preach, her agitation increased so as to attract the attention of those around. The house was soon full, and I took a text and went on to preach.

The Spirit of the Lord was evidently poured out; and at the close of the sermon I called upon any who

would give their hearts to God to come and take the front seat. This young woman was the first to arise ; she burst out into the aisle, and came forward like a person in a state of desperation. She seemed to have lost all sense of the presence of anybody but God. She came rushing forward, until she finally fell in the aisle, and shrieked with agony. A large number arose in different parts and came forward ; and a goodly number appeared to give their hearts to God upon the spot, and among them this young woman. On inquiry, I found that she was rather the belle of the place ; that she was an agreeable girl, but was regarded by everybody as vain.

Many years afterwards, I saw a man who called my attention to that meeting. I inquired after the young woman. He informed me that he knew her ; that she still resided there, was married, was very useful ; and had always, from that time, been a very earnest Christian.

I preached a few times at this place, and then the question of Gouverneur came up again ; and God seemed to say, "Go to Gouverneur again ; the time has come." Brother Nash had come a few days before, and was spending some time with me. At the time of this last call to Gouverneur, I had some two or three appointments ahead, in that part of Rutland. I said therefore to Brother Nash, "You must go to Gouverneur and see what is there, and come back and make your report."

He started the next morning, and after two or three days he returned, saying that he had found many professors of religion under considerable exercise of

mind, and that he was confident that there was a good deal of the Spirit of the Lord among the people; but that they were not aware what the state of things really was. I then informed the people that I was called to Gouverneur, and could make no more appointments to preach in that place.

CHAPTER IX.

REVIVAL AT GOUVERNEUR.

BROTHER NASH returned the next day, and made the appointment I desired. I had to ride nearly thirty miles. In the morning it rained hard ; but abated in time for me to ride to Antwerp. While I was getting dinner the rain came on again until late in the afternoon. However, the rain abated again in time for me to ride rapidly to Gouverneur. I found that the people had given up expecting me that day, in consequence of the great rain.

Before I reached the village, I met Mr. S——, one of the principal members, returning from the church meeting to his house, which I had just passed. He stopped his carriage, and said, "Is this Mr. Finney?" After my reply in the affirmative, he asked, "Please to go back to my house, for I shall insist on your being my guest. You are fatigued with the long ride and the roads are so bad, you will not have any meeting to-night." I replied that I must fulfil my appointment, and asked him if the church meeting had adjourned. He said it had not when he left ; and he thought it possible I might reach the village before they would dismiss.

I rode rapidly on, alighted at the meeting-house door, and hurried in. Brother Nash stood in front of the pulpit, having just risen to dismiss the meeting. In a word I informed them that I had come to fulfil my

appointment ; and, the Lord willing, I would preach.

When the hour arrived, the house was filled. The people had heard enough for and against me to have curiosity excited. The Lord gave me a text, and the word took powerful effect.

The village hotel was at that time kept by Dr. S——, an avowed Universalist. The next morning I went out to call on the people, and converse with them about their souls, and found the village excited. After making a few calls, I dropped into a tailor's shop, where I found a number discussing the sermon of the night before.

Dr. S—— I had never heard of ; but I found him at this tailor's shop defending Universalist sentiments. As I went in, the remarks made immediately opened the conversation ; and Dr. S—— stepped forward to dispute the positions I had advanced. Somebody introduced him to me ; and I said, "Doctor, I should be very happy to converse with you, but if we are to have a conversation, we must first agree upon the method." I was too much used to Universalists to expect any good to come of it, unless certain terms were agreed upon and adhered to. I proposed, therefore, first that we should take up one point at a time, and settle it, and then another, and another, confining ourselves to the point immediately in debate ; secondly, that we should not interrupt, but each one should be at liberty to give his views ; and thirdly that there should be no cavilling. but that we should observe candour and courtesy, and give to every argument due weight. I knew they were all of one way of thinking ; that they were banded together and had come for the sake of sustaining each other.

Having settled the preliminaries, we commenced ; and

it did not take long to demolish every position assumed. He really knew but little of the Bible. He had a way of disposing of the principal passages that are generally arrayed against Universalism ; but he dwelt mainly on the injustice of endless punishment.

I showed that he had but slender ground to stand on ; and he soon took the position, that, whatever the Bible said, endless punishment was unjust, and that therefore, if the Bible threatened men with endless punishment, it could not be true. This settled the question so far as the Bible was concerned. I could easily see that they were all sceptics, and would not give in because the Bible contradicted their views. I then closed in with him on the justice of endless punishment. I saw that his friends became agitated, and felt as if the foundations were giving away. Soon one of them went out ; and as I proceeded, another went out, and finally they all forsook him, seeing, as they must have done, that he was utterly wrong.

He had been their leader ; and God gave me an opportunity to use him up in the presence of followers. When he had nothing more to say, I urged the question of immediate attention to salvation, and very kindly bid him good morning, and went away, feeling sure that I should soon hear of that conversation again.

The doctor's wife was a member of the church. She told me a day or two after that her husband came home from that conversation apparently greatly agitated, though she did not know where he had been. He would walk the room, and then sit down, but not remain sitting. She said—" Doctor, what is the matter ?" " Nothing," was his reply ; but his agitation increased ; and she in-

quired again, "Doctor, do tell me what is the matter?" She suspected that he had somewhere fallen in with me, and she said, "Doctor, have you seen Mr. Finney this morning?" This brought him to a stand; and he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Yes! and he has turned my weapons on my own head!" His agony became intense; and as soon as the way was opened he surrendered himself to conviction, and soon after expressed hope in Christ. In a few days his companions were brought in, one after the other, till the revival made a clean sweep of them.

As soon as the revival broke out, and attracted attention, the Baptist brethren began to oppose. A set of young men joined hand-in-hand to strengthen each other in opposition. Those young men seemed to stand like a bulwark in the way of the progress of the work.

Brother Nash and myself, after consultation, made up our minds that that thing must be overcome by prayer. We therefore retired to a grove and gave ourselves up to prayer until we prevailed; and we felt confident that no power which earth or hell could interpose would be allowed permanently to stop the revival.

The next Sabbath, after preaching morning and afternoon myself—for I did the preaching, and Brother Nash gave himself up almost continually to prayer—we met at five o'clock in the church for a prayer meeting. The meeting-house was filled. Near the close of the meeting, Brother Nash arose and addressed that company of young men who had joined hand-in-hand to resist the revival.

Brother Nash addressed them very earnestly, and pointed out the guilt and danger of the course they were

taking. Towards the close of his address he waxed exceedingly warm, and said, "Now, mark me, young men, God will break your ranks in less than one week, either by converting some of you, or by sending some of you to hell. He will do this as certainly as the Lord is my God!" He was standing where he brought his hand down on the top of the pew before him, so as to make it jar. He sat immediately down, dropped his head, and groaned with pain.

The house was as still as death, and most of the people held down their heads. I could see that the young men were agitated. For myself, I regretted that Brother Nash had gone so far. He had committed himself, that God would either take the life of some of them, and send them to hell, or convert some of them, within a week. However, on Tuesday morning, the leader came to me in the greatest distress, prepared to submit; and as soon as I came to press him he broke down, confessed, and manifestly gave himself to Christ. Then he said, "What shall I do, Mr. Finney?" I replied, "Go immediately to all your companions, and pray with them, and exhort them at once to turn to the Lord." He did so; and before the week was out, nearly if not all of that class of young men were hoping in Christ.

There was a merchant living in the village of the name of S——, a very amiable man, a gentleman, but a Deist. His wife was daughter of a Presbyterian minister; she was his second wife; and his first had also been the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. He had thus married into two ministers' families. He was a reading, reflecting man. Both of

his fathers-in-law were old-school Presbyterians, and had put into his hands the class of books that presented their peculiar views. This had greatly stumbled him ; and the more he had read, the more he was fixed in his convictions that the Bible was a fable.

His wife urgently entreated me to come and converse with her husband. She informed me of his views, and of the pains that had been taken to lead him to embrace religion. But she said he was so firmly settled, she did not know that any conversation could meet the case. I promised to call and see him, and did so. His store was in the front part of the building in which they resided. She went into the store and requested him to come. He said it would do no good ; that he had talked with ministers enough ; that he knew just what I should say, and he could not spend the time ; besides, it was very repulsive to his feelings. She replied, "Mr. S——, you have never been in the habit of treating ministers, who called to see you, in this way. I have invited Mr. Finney to call ; and I shall be greatly mortified if you decline to see him."

He greatly respected and loved his wife ; and she was indeed a gem of a woman. To oblige her, he consented to come. Mrs. S—— introduced me, and left the room. I then said, "Mr. S——, I have not come in here to have any dispute ; but if you are willing to converse, it is possible that I may suggest something that may help you over some difficulties in regard to religion, as I probably have felt them all myself." As I addressed him in great kindness, he immediately seemed to feel at home, and sat down and said,

“Now, Mr. Finney, there is no need of our having a long conversation on this point. We are both of us so familiar with the arguments that I can state to you, in a very few minutes, just the objections on which I rest, and which I find myself utterly unable to overcome. I suppose I know beforehand how you will answer them, and that the answer will be utterly unsatisfactory. But if you desire it, I will state them.”

I begged him to do so ; and he began, as nearly as I can recollect, in this way : “You and I agree in believing in the existence of God.” “Yes.” “Well, we agree that He is infinitely wise, and good, and powerful.” “Yes.” “We agree that He has, in our very creation, given us certain irresistible convictions of right and wrong, of justice and injustice.” “Yes.” “Well, we agree, then, that whatever contravenes our irresistible convictions of justice cannot come from God.” “Yes.” “What, according to our irresistible convictions, is neither wise nor good, cannot be from God.” “Yes, we agree in that.” “Well, now,” said he, “the Bible teaches that God has created us with a sinful nature, or that we come into existence totally sinful and incapable of any good, and this in accordance with certain pre-established laws of which God is the author ; that notwithstanding this sinful nature, which is utterly incapable of any good, God commands us to obey Him, and to be good, when to do so is utterly impossible ; and He commands this on pain of eternal death.”

I replied, “Mr. S——, have you a Bible ? Will you not turn to the passage that teaches this ?” “Why, there is no need of that,” he said ; “you admit that

the Bible teaches it." "No," I said, "I do not believe any such thing." "Then," he continued, "the Bible teaches that God has imputed Adam's sin to his posterity ; that we inherit the guilt of that sin by nature, and are exposed to eternal damnation. Now, I do not care who says it, or what book teaches such a thing, I know that such teaching cannot be from God. This is a direct contradiction of my irresistible convictions of right and justice." "Yes," I replied, "and so it is directly in contradiction with my own. But now, where is this taught?"

He began to quote the Catechism, as he had done before. "But," I replied, "that is Catechism, not Bible." "Why," said he, "you are a Presbyterian minister, are you not? I thought the Catechism was good authority." "No," I said, "we are talking about the Bible. Can you say that this is the doctrine of the Bible?" "Oh," he said, "if you are going to deny that it is taught in the Bible—why, that is taking such ground as I never knew a Presbyterian minister to take." He then proceeded to say that the Bible commanded men to repent ; it commanded them to obey and believe, and yet at the same time taught them that this was impossible. I of course closed with him again, and asked him where these things were taught. He quoted Catechism ; but I would not receive it.

He went on to say that the Bible taught also that Christ died only for the elect ; and yet it commanded all men everywhere, whether elect or non-elect, to believe, on pain of eternal death. "The fact is," said he, "the Bible, in its commands and teachings, contra-

venes my innate sense of justice. I cannot, I will not receive it !” He became very positive and warm ; but I said : “ Mr. S——, there is a mistake. These are not the teachings of the Bible. They are the traditions of men.” “ Well, then,” said he, “ Mr. Finney, tell me what you do believe !” This he said with considerable impatience. I said, “ If you will give me a hearing, I will tell you what I believe.” I then told him my views of both the law and the Gospel. He was intelligent enough to understand easily and quickly. In the course of an hour I took him over the whole ground of his objections. He became intensely interested ; and I saw that the views were new to him.

When I came to the atonement, and showed that it was made for all men—dwelt upon its nature, its design, its extent, and the freeness of salvation through Christ, I saw his feelings rise, till at last he put both hands over his face, threw his head forward upon his knees, and trembled with emotion. I saw that the blood rushed to his head, and that tears began to flow. I rose quickly and left the room without saying another word. I saw that an arrow transfixed him, and I expected him to be converted immediately. It turned that he was converted before he left the room.

Very soon after, the meeting-house-bell tolled for a prayer and conference meeting ; I went, and soon Mr. and Mrs. S—— came in. His countenance showed that he had been greatly moved. The people looked round, and appeared surprised to see Mr. S——. He had been in the habit of attending worship on the Sabbath ; but to come to a prayer-meeting, and that in the day-time, was something new. For his sake I took up a

good deal of the time in remarks to which he paid the utmost attention.

His wife afterwards told me that as he walked home he said, "My dear, where has all my infidelity gone? I cannot recall it; I cannot make it look as if it had any sense in it; it appears to me as if it always had been perfect nonsense; and how I could ever have viewed the subject as I did, or respected my own arguments as I did, I cannot imagine. It seems to me as if I had been called to pass judgment on some splendid piece of architecture, some magnificent temple; and that as soon as I came in view of one corner of the structure I fell into disgust, and turned away and refused to inspect it further. I condemned the whole, without at all regarding its proportions. Just so I have treated the government of God." He had always been bitter against the doctrine of endless punishment; but on this occasion he said that, for the manner in which he had treated God, he deserved endless damnation.

He warmly espoused the cause of Christ, enlisted heartily in the promotion of the revival, joined the church, soon after became a deacon; and to the day of his death was a very useful man.

After the conversion of Mr. S——, I thought it was time to put a stop to the opposition of the Baptist Church. I therefore had an interview first with a deacon, who had been bitter in his opposition; and said, "Now, you have carried your opposition far enough. You must be satisfied that this is the work of God."

He confessed that he was sorry; and promised that he would not oppose any more. He said he had made a mistake, and had been deceived. He then went after

his minister ; and I had a long conversation with them together.

I then said, " A considerable number of young people, whose parents belong to your church, have been converted." If I recollect, as many as forty of their young people had been converted in that revival. " Now, if you go to proselytizing, that will create sectarian feeling, and will be worse than any opposition which you have offered. In spite of your opposition, the work has gone on ; because the Presbyterian brethren have kept clear of a sectarian spirit, and have had the spirit of prayer. But proselytizing will stop the revival immediately."

This was on Friday. The next day, Saturday, was the day for their monthly covenant meeting. When they had gathered, he threw the doors of the church open and invited the converts to come forward, tell their experience, and join the church. As many as could be persuaded to do so told their experience ; and the next day there was a great parade in baptizing them. The minister sent off immediately, and secured the help of one of the most proselytizing Baptist ministers that I ever knew. He came in, and began to preach and lecture on baptism.

They traversed the town for converts in every direction ; and whenever they could find any one to join, they would get up a procession, march, sing, and make a great parade in going to the water. This soon so grieved the Presbyterian Church as to destroy their spirit of prayer and faith, and the work came to a dead stand. For six weeks there was not a single conversion. All, both saints and sinners, were discussing the question of baptism.

There was a considerable number of men, and some of them prominent men in the village, that had been under strong conviction, and appeared to be near conversion, who had been entirely diverted by this discussion ; and, indeed, this seemed to be the universal effect. Everybody could see that the revival had stopped.

I said to the people on the Sabbath, “ You see how it is—that the work of conversion is suspended, and we do not know that a conversion has occurred for six weeks. Now I do not want to take up a Sabbath in preaching on this subject ; but if you will come on Wednesday afternoon at one o’clock, and bring your Bibles, and your lead pencils to mark the passages, I will read to you all the passages in the Bible that relate to the mode of baptism ; and I will give you, as nearly as I understand them, the views of Baptist brethren on all those passages, together with my own, and you shall judge for yourselves where the truth lies.

When Wednesday came, the house was crowded. I saw quite a number of Baptists present. I read, first in the Old Testament, then in the New, all the passages that had any reference to the mode of baptism. I gave the views that the Baptists had of those texts, and the reasons. I then gave my own views, and my reasons. I saw that the impression was good, and that no bad spirit prevailed ; and the people appeared satisfied. The Baptists were quite satisfied that I stated their views fairly, and as strongly as they could state them themselves, and also their reasons. Before I dismissed the meeting I said, “ If you will come to-morrow, at the same hour, at one o’clock, I will read

to you all the passages in the Bible that relate to the subjects of baptism, and pursue the same course as I have done to-day.

The next day the house was crowded more than the day before. Quite a number of the principal Baptists were present. After going through the introductory services, I arose and commenced reading. At this point an elder arose and said, "Mr. Finney, I have an appointment, and cannot stay; but I shall wish to answer you; and how shall I know what course you take?" I replied, "Elder, I have a skeleton, wherein I quote passages that I read, and note the order in which I discuss the subject. You can have my skeleton, if you please, and reply." He then went out, and went away.

I then took up the covenant made with Abraham; and read everything in the Old Testament that directly bore upon the question of the relation of families and of children to that covenant. I gave the Baptist view of the passages, together with my own, with the reasons on both sides. I then took up the New Testament, and went through with all the passages referring to the subject. The tears flowed very freely when I held up that covenant which God makes with parents and their household.

Just before I was through, the deacon of the Presbyterian Church had occasion to go out with a child. He told me afterwards that, as he went into the vestibule, he found the old elder sitting there with the door ajar, listening and weeping.

When I was done, the people thronged around, and with tears thanked me for so full an exhibition of that

subject. The meeting was attended by the community generally. The question was intelligently settled, and people ceased to talk about it. In a few days the spirit of prayer returned, and the revival went on again with great power, the ordinances were administered, and a large number of converts united with the church.

Mr. S—— had a very interesting family; and his wife—called Aunt Lucy—had no children, but they had adopted one child after another, until they had ten; and these were so nearly of an age that the family was composed of himself, and his wife, and ten young people, about equally divided, young men and young women. They were all converted, and their conversions were very striking. They were bright converts, and very intelligent; and a happier and more lovely family I never saw.

But Aunt Lucy had been converted under other circumstances; and she had never before seen the freshness, strength, and joy of converts in a powerful revival. Their faith, love, joy, and peace completely stumbled her; she began to think that she was never converted; and although she had given herself, heart and soul, to the promotion of the work, yet, right in the midst of it, she fell into despair, in spite of all that could be said or done. She concluded that she never had been converted, and of course that she never could be.

This introduced into the family a matter of great pain and concern; her husband thought she would go deranged. The young people, who regarded her as a mother, were filled with concern; and the house was thrown into mourning. Mr. S—— gave his time to con-

verse and to pray with her, to try to revive hope. I had several conversations with her; but in the great light which the experience of those young converts threw around her, she could not be persuaded to believe that she was converted, or ever could be.

This state of things continued till I began to think that she would become deranged. The street where they lived was thickly settled, almost a village, for three miles in extent. The work had extended in that street until there was but one adult unconverted person left. He was a young man, and was almost frantic in his opposition to the work. Almost the whole neighbourhood gave themselves to prayer for this young man, and his case was in almost everybody's mouth.

One day I found Aunt Lucy taking on much about this B—— H——. "Oh, dear!" she said; "what will become of him? Why, Mr. S——, he will certainly lose his soul! What will become of him?" She seemed to be in agony. I listened for a few moments, and then looked gravely, and said: "Aunt Lucy, when you and B—— H—— die, God will have to make a partition in hell, and give you a room by yourself." She opened her large blue eyes and looked with a reproving look. "Why, Mr. Finney?" said she. I said, "Do you think God will be guilty of so great an impropriety as to put you and B—— H—— in the same place? He is raving; and you are almost insane in feeling the abuse which he heaps upon God, and with fear that he is going to hell. Now, can two persons in two such opposite states of mind be sent to the same place?" I calmly

met her reproving gaze. In a few moments her features relaxed, she smiled, the first time for many days. "It is just so, my dear," said Mr. S——, "just so. How can you and B—— H—— go to the same place?" She laughed and said, "We cannot." From that moment despair cleared up; and she came out clear, and as happy as any of the young converts. B—— H—— was afterwards converted.

About three-quarters of a mile from Mr. S——'s lived Mr. M——, a strong Universalist. One morning, Father Nash, who was with me, rose at a very early hour, and went back to a grove some fifty rods from the road, to have a season of prayer. It was one of those clear mornings on which it is possible to hear sounds at a great distance. Mr. M—— was out of doors, and heard the voice of prayer; he could distinctly hear Father Nash's voice. It lodged an arrow in his heart. He said it brought a sense of the reality of religion over him such as he had never experienced. He found no relief till he found it in believing in Jesus.

I do not know the number converted in that revival. It was a large farming town, settled by well-to-do inhabitants. The great majority, I am confident, were converted.

I have not been in that place for many years; but I have often heard from there; and have always understood that there has been a very healthful state of religion in that place, and that they have never had a discussion on baptism since.

The doctrines preached were those that I have preached everywhere. The total moral, voluntary depravity of unregenerate man; the necessity of a

radical change of heart through the truth, by the agency of the Holy Ghost ; the divinity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ ; His vicarious atonement, equal to the wants of all mankind ; the gift, divinity, and agency of the Holy Ghost ; repentance, faith, justification by faith, sanctification by faith ; persistence in holiness as a condition of salvation : indeed, all the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel were stated and set forth with as much clearness as was possible. A great spirit of prayer prevailed ; and after the discussion on baptism, a spirit of unity and brotherly love prevailed also.

CHAPTER X.

REVIVAL AT DE KALB.

FROM Gouverneur I went to De Kalb, a village further north sixteen miles. Here were a Presbyterian Church and minister, and the minister was decidedly a good man. but the church was small. I began to hold meetings in De Kalb. The village was small, the people scattered, the country was new, and the roads bad ; but a revival commenced, and went forward with power.

A few years before there had been a revival there under the Methodists, attended with a good deal of excitement ; and many cases had occurred of what Methodists call “ Falling under the power of God.” This the Presbyterians had resisted, and a bad feeling had arisen, the Methodists accusing the Presbyterians of having opposed the revival because of these cases of falling.

I had not preached long before, one evening, just at the close of my sermon, I observed a man fall from his seat, and the people gathered round to take care of him. From what I saw I was satisfied that it was a case of falling under the power of God, as the Methodists would express it. I had a fear that it might reproduce that state of division and alienation that had before existed ; but on inquiry I learned that it was one of the principal members of the Presbyterian Church that had fallen. It was remarkable that during this revival there were

several cases of this kind among the Presbyterians, and none among the Methodists. This led to such confessions and explanations among the different churches as to secure a state of great cordiality and good feeling.

While labouring at De Kalb I first became acquainted with Mr. F——, of Ogdensburgh. He heard of the revival in De Kalb, and came from Ogdensburgh, sixteen miles, to see it. He was wealthy and very benevolent. He proposed to employ me as his missionary to work in the towns throughout that county, and he would pay me a salary. However, I declined to pledge myself to preach in any particular place, or to confine my labours within any given lines.

Mr. F—— spent several days with me in visiting, and in attending our meetings. He had been educated in Philadelphia, an old-school Presbyterian, and was himself an elder in the church in Ogdensburgh. On going away he left a letter for me, containing three ten-dollar bills. A few days later he came again, and spent two or three days, attended our meetings, and became very much interested. When he went away he left another letter, containing, as before, three ten-dollar bills. Thus I found myself possessed of sixty dollars, with which I immediately purchased a buggy. Before this time, though I had a horse, I had no carriage ; and my young wife and myself used to go a good deal on foot.

The revival took a very strong hold in this place, and among others, one of the elders of the church, of the name of B——, was thoroughly broken down, and became quite another man.

One Saturday, just before evening, a German merchant tailor from Ogdensburgh, of the name of F——, called

and informed me that Squire F—— had sent him from Ogdensburgh to take my measure for a suit of clothes.

I asked him if he would stay over the Sabbath, and take my measure on Monday morning. I said, "It is too late for you to return to-night, and if I allow you to take my measure to-night you will go home to-morrow." He admitted that he expected to do so. I said, "Then you shall not take it. If you will not stay till Monday, I will not be measured." He remained.

The same afternoon there were among other arrivals from Ogdensburgh, Elder S——, who was in the same church with Mr. F——. Mr. S——'s son, an unconverted young man, came with him.

Elder S—— attended meeting in the morning, and at the intermission was invited by Elder B—— to go home with him and get some refreshment. Elder B—— was full of the Holy Spirit, and on the way home he preached to Elder S——, who was at that time very cold and backward. Elder S—— was very much penetrated by his words.

Soon after they entered the house the table was spread, and they were invited to take some refreshment. As they drew round the table S—— said to B——, "How did you get this blessing?" B—— replied, "I stopped lying to God. All my Christian life I have been making pretences, and asking God for things that I was not, on the whole, willing to have, and I had gone on and prayed, and often had been insincere. As soon as I made up my mind that I never would say anything in prayer that I did not really mean, God answered me, and I was filled with the Holy Ghost."

At this moment Mr. S——, who had not commenced

to eat, pushed his chair back, and fell on his knees and began to confess how he had lied to God, and how he had played the hypocrite in prayer, as well as in life. The Holy Ghost fell upon him immediately.

In the afternoon the people assembled for worship; and as I was in the pulpit reading a hymn I heard somebody talking very loud, and approaching the house. Directly two men came in. Elder B—— I knew, the other was a stranger. As soon as he came in, he came straight into the desk. “God bless you!” said he, “God bless you!” He then told me and the congregation what the Lord had just done for his soul.

His countenance was all aglow, and he was so changed that those who knew him were perfectly astonished. His son, who had not known of this change, rose up and was hastening out of the church. His father cried, “Do not leave the house, my son, for I never loved you before.” He went on to speak, and the power with which he spoke was perfectly astonishing. The people melted down on every side, and his son broke down almost immediately.

Very soon the Roman Catholic tailor, Mr. F——, rose and said, “I must tell you what the Lord has done for my soul. I was brought up a Roman Catholic, and I never dared to read my Bible. I was told that if I did the devil would carry me off. Sometimes, when I dared to look into it, it seemed as if the devil was peering over my shoulder. But I see it is all a delusion.” He went on to tell what the Lord had done for him, just there on the spot—what views the Lord had given him of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

This made a great impression; I could not preach. The whole course of the meeting had taken on a type

which the Lord had given it. I sat still, and saw the salvation of God. All that afternoon conversions were multiplied. As they arose one after another and told what the Lord had done, and was doing, for their souls, the impression increased; and so spontaneous a movement by the Holy Ghost in convicting and converting sinners I had scarcely ever seen.

The next day Elder S—— returned to Ogdensburgh; but, as I understand, he made many calls, conversed and prayed with many families, and thus the revival was extended to Ogdensburgh.

It was the early part of October, the synod to which I belonged met in Utica. I took my wife, and went down to Utica to visit her father's family living near.

Mr. Gale had left Adams not long after I left, and had removed to a farm in the town of Western, Oneida county, where he was endeavouring to regain his health, and was employed in teaching some young men, who proposed to preach the Gospel. I spent a few days at the synod, and then set out on my return to my former field of labour in St. Lawrence county.

We had not gone more than a dozen miles when we met Mr. Gale on his way to Utica. He leaped from his carriage and said, "God bless you, brother Finney! I was going down to the synod to see you; you must go home with me; I cannot be denied. I do not believe that I ever was converted, and I wrote the other day to Adams to know where a letter would reach you, as I wanted to open my mind to you." He was so importunate that I consented, and we drove immediately to Western.

In reflecting upon what I had said of the revivals of religion in Jefferson and St. Lawrence countries, I am

not quite sure that I have laid as much stress as I intended upon the manifest agency of the Holy Spirit. I wish it to be distinctly understood in all my narrative that I always laid the utmost stress upon this fact, underlying, directing, and giving efficiency to the means, without which nothing would be accomplished.

I have said more than once that the spirit of prayer that prevailed was a very marked feature. It was common for young converts to be greatly exercised, and in some instances so much so that they were constrained to pray whole nights, and until their bodily strength was exhausted, for the conversion of souls. There was a great pressure of the Holy Spirit upon Christians, and they seemed to bear about with them the burden of immortal souls. They manifested the greatest solemnity of mind and the greatest watchfulness in all their words and actions. It was common to find Christians, when they met, instead of engaging in conversation to fall on their knees in prayer.

Not only were prayer-meetings multiplied and fully attended, not only was there great solemnity in those meetings, but there was a mighty spirit of secret prayer. Christians prayed a great deal, many of them spending many hours in private. It was also the case that two or more would take the promise: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven," and make some particular person a subject of prayer; and it was wonderful to what an extent they prevailed. Answers were so multiplied that no one could escape the conviction that God was daily and hourly answering.

If anything occurred that threatened to mar the work, if there was any appearance of any root of bitterness springing up, or any tendency to fanaticism, Christians would take the alarm, and give themselves to prayer that God would direct and control all things, and it was surprising to see to what extent, and by what means, God would remove obstacles out of the way.

In regard to my own experience, unless I had the spirit of prayer, I could do nothing! If even for a day or an hour I lost the spirit of grace and supplication, I found myself unable to preach with power and efficiency, or to win souls by personal conversation.

For several weeks before I left De Kalb to go to the synod, I was very strongly exercised. I found myself so borne down with the weight of immortal souls that I was constrained to pray without ceasing. Some of my experiences, indeed, alarmed me. A spirit of importunity sometimes came upon me so that I would say to God that He had made a promise to answer prayer, and I could not, and would not, be denied. I cannot tell how absurd unbelief looked to me, and how certain it was, in my mind, that God would answer prayer—those prayers that from day to day, and from hour to hour, I found myself offering in such agony and faith. I had no idea of the shape the answer would take, the locality in which the prayers would be answered, or the exact time of the answer. My impression was that the answer was near, even at the door; and I felt myself strengthened in the divine life, put on the harness for a mighty conflict with the powers of darkness, and expected soon to see a far more powerful out-pouring of the Spirit in that new country.

CHAPTER XI.

REVIVAL AT WESTERN.

I HAVE spoken of my turning aside to Western as I was returning from the synod. At this place commenced that series of revivals afterwards called the Western Revivals.

Mr. Gale had settled upon a farm in Western; and was employing some young men, and was teaching them, and endeavouring to repair his health. For several weeks I was his guest. We arrived on Thursday afternoon, and there was a stated prayer-meeting in the school-house. The church had no settled minister, and Mr. Gale was unable to preach. I believe they usually had a minister only a part of the time; and for some time previous to my going, had no stated preaching in the Presbyterian Church. There were three elders, and a few members; but the church was very small, and religion at low-water mark. There seemed to be no life, courage, or enterprise.

In the afternoon, Mr. Gale invited me to go to the prayer-meeting. They asked me to take the lead; but I declined, expecting to be there only for that afternoon, and preferring rather to hear them pray and talk. The meeting was opened by one of the elders, who read a chapter, then a hymn. After this he made a long prayer, or an exhortation, or a narrative—I hardly know what to call it. He told the Lord how many years they had

been holding that prayer-meeting weekly, and that no answer had been given to their prayers. He made such statements and confessions as greatly shocked me. After he had done, another elder took up the same theme. He read a hymn, and, after singing, engaged in a long prayer, in which he went over very nearly the same ground, making such statements as the first omitted. Then followed the third elder, in the same strain. By this time I could say with Paul that my spirit was stirred within me. They were about to dismiss the meeting; but one of the elders asked if I would make a remark. I took their statements and confessions for a text; and it seemed at the time that God inspired me to give them a terrible searching.

When I arose I had no idea what I should say; but I took their prayers, statements, and confessions, and dissected them. I asked if it had been understood that that was a mock prayer-meeting—whether they had come together professedly to mock God, by implying that all the blame of what had been passing all this time was to be ascribed to His sovereignty?

At first they all looked angry. Some afterwards said that they were on the point of going out. I followed on the track until the elder who was the principal man, bursting into tears, exclaimed, “Brother Finney, it is all true!” He fell upon his knees and wept aloud. This was the signal for a general breaking down. Every man and woman went down upon their knees. There were probably not more than a dozen present; but they were the leading members in the church. They wept, confessed, and broke their hearts before God. This scene continued for an hour.

As soon as they recovered, they besought me to remain and preach on the Sabbath. I consented to do so; my mind was greatly exercised. I went off frequently into the church to engage in prayer. On Sabbath the church was full. I preached all day, and God came down with great power. It was manifest that the work of grace had begun. I made appointments to preach in different parts of the town, in school-houses, and at the centre, during the week; and the work increased.

In the meantime my own mind was much exercised; and I found that the spirit of prayer was prevailing, especially among the female members. Mrs. B—— and Mrs. H——, the wives of two of the elders, were greatly exercised in prayer. Each had families of unconverted children; and they laid hold in prayer with an earnestness that gave promise that their families must be converted. Mrs. H——, however, was a woman of feeble health, and had not ventured out to meeting for a long time; but, as the day was pleasant, she was at the prayer-meeting, and seemed to catch the inspiration.

It was the next week that I called at Mr. H——'s, and found him pale and agitated. He said, "Brother Finney, I think my wife will die. She is so exercised that she cannot rest, but is given up entirely to prayer. She has been all the morning in her room, groaning and struggling; and I am afraid it will entirely overcome her strength." Hearing my voice, she came from her room, and upon her face was a heavenly glow. Her countenance was lighted with hope and joy that were plainly from heaven. She exclaimed, "Brother Finney, the Lord has come! This work will spread over all

this region ! A cloud of mercy overhangs us all ; and we shall see such a work of grace as we have never yet seen." Her husband looked surprised. It was new to him, but not to me. I had witnessed such scenes before, and believed that prayer had prevailed.

The work spread, until it began to exhibit unmistakable indications of the direction in which the Spirit of God was leading. The distance to Rome was nine miles. About half way was a small village called Elmer's Hill. There was a large school-house, where I held a weekly lecture ; and it soon became manifest that the work was spreading in the direction of Rome and Utica. There was a settlement north-east of Rome, about three miles, called Wright's Settlement. Large numbers of persons came to attend the meetings at Elmer's Hill from Rome and from Wright's Settlement ; and the work soon began to take effect among them.

I must relate a few incidents that occurred at Western. Mrs. B—— had a large family of unconverted children. One of the sons was a professor of religion at Utica ; the rest were at home. They were a very amiable family ; and the eldest daughter, especially, had been regarded as almost perfect. I went several times to converse with her ; but found that the family were so tender of her that I could not strip away her self-righteousness. She had evidently been made to believe that she was almost, if not quite, a Christian. Her life had been so irreproachable that it was very difficult to convict her of sin. The second daughter was also very amiable ; but she did not regard herself as worthy to be compared with the eldest.

When I was talking with the eldest, trying to make

her see herself as a great sinner, notwithstanding her morality, C——, the second daughter, said, “Mr. Finney, I think that you are too hard upon S——. If you should talk so to me, I should feel that I deserved it; but I don’t think she does.” After being defeated several times in attempts to secure the conviction and conversion of S——, I made up my mind to bide my time, and improve some opportunity when I should find her away from home, or alone. It was not long before the opportunity came. I entered into conversation with her, and by God’s help stripped the covering from her heart, and she was brought under powerful conviction. The Spirit pursued her with mighty power. The family were surprised and greatly distressed; but God pushed the question home till, after a struggle, she broke down, and came into the kingdom. Her convictions were so thorough that she was strong in faith, clear in apprehension of duty and of truth, and immediately became a power for good among friends and acquaintances.

The second daughter became very much alarmed, and anxious for the salvation of her own soul. The mother seemed to be in real travail of soul day and night. I called in to see the family almost daily, and sometimes two or three times a day. One child after another was converted; and we were expecting to see C—— come out a bright convert; but she lingered. It was plain the Spirit was resisted; and one day I found her alone. I asked her how she was getting on, and she replied, “Mr. Finney, I am losing my conviction. I do not feel nearly as much concerned about myself as I have done.” Just at this moment a door was opened, and Mrs. B—— came in, and I told her what C—— had said.

It shocked her so that she groaned aloud, and fell prostrate on the floor. Unable to rise, she struggled and groaned out her prayers in a manner that immediately indicated that C—— must be converted. She was unable to say much in words, but her groans and tears witnessed extreme agony. As soon as this scene had occurred, the Spirit of God manifestly came upon C—— afresh. She fell upon her knees, and broke down; and became to all appearance as thorough a convert as S——. The B—— children, sons and daughters, were all converted at that time, except the youngest, then a little child. One of the sons has preached the Gospel for many years.

Among other incidents, I recollect the case of a young woman, in a distant part of the town, who came to the meeting at the centre almost every day. I had conversed with her, and found her deeply convicted. I was expecting to hear that she had been converted; but she remained stationary, or rather despair increased. This led me to suspect that something was wrong. I asked if her parents were Christians. She said they were members of the church. I asked if they attended meetings. She said, "Yes, on the Sabbath." "Do not your parents attend meetings at other times?" "No." "Do you have family prayers at home?" "No, sir, we used to have; but we have not had family prayers for a long time." This revealed the stumbling-block at once. I inquired when I could probably find her father and mother at home. She said they were seldom away. Feeling that it was infinitely dangerous to leave this case, I went to see the family.

This daughter was the only child at home. I found

her bowed down, and said to the mother, "The Spirit of the Lord is striving with your daughter." "Yes," she said, "I don't know but He is." I asked if she was praying for her. She gave me an answer that led me to understand that she did not know what it was to pray. I inquired for her husband. She said that he was in the field. I asked her to call him in. I said to him, "Do you see the state that your daughter is in?" He replied that he thought she felt very bad. "And are you awake, and engaged in prayer for her?" His answer revealed the fact that if he was ever converted, he was a backslider, and had no hold upon God. "And," said I, "you do not have family prayers." "No, sir." "Now," said I, "I have seen your daughter bowed down, and I have learned that the difficulty is at home. You have shut up the kingdom of heaven against your daughter. You neither enter yourself, nor will you suffer her to enter. Now you must repent. I do not intend to leave until you and your wife repent. You must establish family prayers, and build up the altar that has fallen down."

I was so earnest that they both began to weep. My faith was so strong that I did not trifle when I told them that I would not leave until they repented. I felt that the work must be done, and done then. I cast myself down upon my knees; and they knelt down and wept sorely. I confessed for them, and tried to lead them to God, and to prevail in their behalf. They both broke down, confessed their sins; and the daughter arose, rejoicing in Christ. Many answers to prayer, and many scenes of great interest were presented in this revival.

One passage of my experience, for the honour of God, I must not omit to relate in this connection. I had preached and prayed almost continually during the time that I had been at Mr. Gale's. As I was accustomed to use my voice in private prayer, for convenience' sake, that I might not be heard, I had spread a buffalo robe on the hay-loft; where I used to spend much of my time. Mr. Gale had admonished me, several times, that, if I did not take care, I should go beyond my strength and break down. It was November, the weather was becoming cold, and Mr. Gale and I had been out visiting inquirers. We came home and went into the barn, and put out the horse. Instead of going into the house, I crept up into the hay-loft to pour out my burdened soul to God. I prayed until my burden left me. I was so far exhausted that I fell down and lost myself in sleep. I must have fallen asleep almost instantly. The first I knew, Mr. Gale came climbing up into the hay-loft, and said, "Brother Finney, are you dead?" I awoke, and at first could give no account of why I was there, and could form no idea how long I had been there.

Mr. Gale told me the progress of his mind; that he had firmly believed, as he had so frequently urged upon me, that God would not bless my labours, because I would not preach what he regarded as the truths of the Gospel. But when he found that the Spirit did accompany my labours, it led to the conclusion that he was wrong; and this led to such an overhauling of his whole state of mind, and of his views as a preacher, as resulted in the conclusion that he had never been converted, and did not understand the Gospel himself. During the revival in Western, he attended nearly all the meetings;

and before many weeks he had come into an entirely different state of mind, and thought I was right. He said he thanked God that he had had no influence with me, to lead me to adopt his views; that I should have been ruined as a minister if he had prevailed. From this time he became a very efficient worker, so far as his health would permit, in that region.

CHAPTER XII.

REVIVAL AT ROME.

AT this time Moses Gillett, pastor of the Congregational Church in Rome, came, in company with a Miss H——, one of the prominent members of his church, to see the work that was going on. They were both greatly impressed. Miss H—— was a very devout and earnest Christian. On their second coming, Mr. Gillett said, "Brother Finney, it seems to me that I have a new Bible; I never before understood the promises as I do now; I never got hold of them before; I cannot rest, my mind is full of the subject, and the promises are new." This conversation gave me to understand that the Lord was preparing him for a great work in his own congregation.

Soon after this, and when the revival was in its full strength at Western, Mr. Gillett persuaded me to exchange a day with him.

On the Saturday before the day of our exchange, on my way to Rome, I greatly regretted that I had consented. I felt that it would greatly mar the work in Western, because Mr. Gillett would preach his old sermons, which could not be adapted to the state of things. However, the people were praying; and it would not stop the work, although it might retard it. I went to Rome and preached three times. To me it was manifest that the word took great effect. I preached in

the morning on "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and followed with something in the same direction in the afternoon and evening. I waited on Monday till Mr. Gillett returned. I told him what my impressions were in respect to the state of the people. He did not seem to realize that the work was beginning with such power; but he wanted to call for inquirers, if there were any, and wished me to be present at the meeting.

Mr. Gillett asked me to be present at the proposed meeting. I told him I would; and that he might circulate information that there would be a meeting of inquiry on Monday evening. The meeting was at the house of one of his deacons. We found the large sitting-room crowded. Mr. Gillett looked around with surprise and agitation; for he found that the meeting was composed of many of the most intelligent and influential members of his congregation; and especially was largely composed of the prominent young men in the town. We spent a while in attempting to converse with them; and I soon saw that there was danger of an outburst of feeling that would be almost uncontrollable. I said to Mr. Gillett, "It will not do to continue the meeting in this shape. I will make some remarks and then dismiss them."

Nothing had been said or done to create excitement; the feeling was all spontaneous. It would probably not be possible, for one who had never witnessed such a scene, to realize what the force of the truth sometimes is under the power of the Holy Ghost. It was, indeed, a sword, and a two-edged sword. The pain that it produced when searchingly presented in a few words of

conversation would create a distress that seemed unendurable.

Mr. Gillett became much agitated. He turned pale: and with a good deal of excitement said, "What shall we do?" I put my hand on his shoulder, and in a whisper said, "Keep quiet, Brother Gillett." I then addressed them in as gentle but plain a manner as I could; calling attention at once to their only remedy, and assuring them that it was present and all-sufficient. I pointed them to Christ, as the Saviour of the world; and kept on in this strain as long as they could well endure it, which was but a few minutes.

Mr. Gillett became so agitated that I stepped up to him, and taking him by the arm said, "Let us pray." We knelt down in the middle of the room. I led in a low, unimpassioned voice; but interceded with the Saviour to interpose His blood, then and there, and to lead all these sinners to accept the salvation which He proffered and to believe to the saving of their souls. The agitation deepened; and as I could hear their sobs and sighs, I closed my prayer and rose from my knees. They all arose; and I said, "Now please go home without speaking a word to each other. Try to keep silent, and do not break out into any boisterous manifestation of feeling."

At this moment a young man, a clerk in Mr. H——'s store, so nearly fainted that he fell upon some that stood near; and they all partially swooned and fell together. This had well-nigh produced a loud shrieking; but I hushed them, and said, "Please set that door wide open, and go out, and let all retire in silence." They did not shriek; but went out sobbing and sighing.

This Mr. W—— kept silence till he entered the door where he lived ; but he could contain himself no longer. He shut the door, fell upon the floor, and burst out into a loud wailing. This brought the family around him, and scattered conviction among the whole of them.

Similar scenes occurred in other families. Several were converted at the meeting, and went home so full of joy that they could hardly contain themselves.

The next morning, as soon as it was fairly day, people began to call at Mr. Gillett's, to have us go and visit members of their families, whom they represented as being under the greatest conviction. We took a hasty breakfast, and as soon as we were in the streets the people ran out from many houses, and begged us to go in. When we went into a house, the neighbours would rush in and fill the largest room. We would stay and give them instruction for a short time, and then go to another house, and the people would follow us.

We found a most extraordinary state of things. Convictions were so deep and universal that we would sometimes go into a house and find some kneeling and some prostrate. We visited, conversed, and prayed in this manner till noon. I then said to Mr. Gillett, " This will never do; we must have a meeting of inquiry. We cannot go from house to house ; we are not meeting the wants of the people." He agreed with me; but the question arose, where shall we have the meeting ?

Mr. F——, a religious man, kept an hotel at the centre of the town. He had a large dining-room; and Mr. Gillett said, " I will step in and see if I can be allowed to appoint the meeting in his dining-room." Without

difficulty he obtained consent, and then went immediately to the public schools and gave notice that at one o'clock there would be a meeting of inquiry. We went home, took our dinner, and started for the meeting. We saw people hurrying, and some of them actually running; they were coming from every direction. By the time we were there, the room, a large one, was crammed.

This meeting was very much like the one we had the night before. Some men of the strongest nerves were so cut down by the remarks made that they were unable to help themselves, and had to be taken home by friends. This meeting lasted till nearly night. It resulted in a great number of hopeful conversions, and was the means of greatly extending the work on every side.

I preached that evening, and Mr. Gillett appointed a meeting for inquiry, the next morning, in the court-house. This was a much larger room than the dining-hall, though not so central. At the hour the court-house was crowded; and we spent a good part of the day in giving instruction, and the work went on with wonderful power. I preached again in the evening, and Mr. Gillett appointed a meeting of inquiry, the next morning, at the church; as no other room in the village was then large enough to hold the inquirers.

At evening we undertook to hold a prayer and conference meeting in a large school-house; but the meeting was hardly begun before the feeling deepened so that, to prevent an undesirable outburst of overwhelming feeling, I proposed to Mr. Gillett that we should dismiss the meeting, and request the people to go in silence, and Christians to spend the evening in secret prayer, or in family prayer, as might seem most desirable

Sinners we exhorted not to sleep until they gave their hearts to God. After this the work became so general that I preached every night for twenty nights in succession, and twice on the Sabbath. Our prayer-meetings during this time were held in the church, in the daytime. The prayer-meeting was held one part of the day, and a meeting for inquiry the other part.

Ministers came in from neighbouring towns, and expressed astonishment at what they saw and heard. Conversions multiplied so rapidly that we had no way of learning who were converted. Therefore every evening, at the close of my sermon, I requested all who had been converted that day to come forward and report themselves, that we might have a little conversation. We were every night surprised by the number and the class who came forward.

At one of our morning prayer-meetings the lower part of the church was full. I arose, and was making some remarks, when an unconverted man, a merchant, came in. He came along till he found a seat near where I stood. He had sat but a few moments, when he fell as if he had been shot. He writhed and groaned in a terrible manner. I stepped to the pew door, and saw that it was agony of mind.

A sceptical physician sat near. He stepped out of his pew, and came and examined the man who was thus distressed. He felt his pulse, and examined the case for a few moments. He said nothing, but turned away, and leaned his head against a post that supported the gallery, and manifested great agitation.

He said afterward that he saw at once that it was distress of mind, it took his scepticism entirely away; he

was soon after converted. We engaged in prayer for the man who fell ; and before he left the house, I believe, his anguish passed away, and he rejoiced in Christ.

Another physician, very amiable, but a sceptic, had a little daughter and a praying wife. Little H——, a girl eight or nine years old, was strongly convicted of sin, and her mother was greatly interested in her state; but her father was, at first, indignant. He said, “The subject of religion is too high for me; I never could understand it; and do you tell me that that little child understands so as to be intelligently convicted? I do not believe it; I know better; I cannot endure it; it is fanaticism; it is madness.” Nevertheless the mother of the child held fast in prayer. The doctor made these remarks with a good deal of spirit. Immediately he took his horse, and went several miles to see a patient. On his way, that subject took possession of his mind in such a manner that it was opened to his understanding; and the plan of salvation by Christ was so clear that he saw how a child could understand it. He wondered that it had ever seemed so mysterious. He regretted exceedingly that he had said what he had about little H——, and felt in haste to get home that he might take it back. He came home another man; told what had passed in his own mind; encouraged little H—— to come to Christ; and both father and daughter have since been earnest Christians, and have lived long and done much good.

In this revival God did some terrible things in righteousness. On one Sabbath while I was there, as we came out of the pulpit, and were about to leave the church, a man came in haste to Mr. Gillett and myself,

and requested us to go to a certain place, saying that a man had just fallen down dead. I was engaged in conversing with somebody, and Mr. Gillett went alone. When I was through with the conversation I went to Mr. Gillett's house, and he soon returned and related this fact. Three men had been opposing the work, had met that Sabbath and spent the day in drinking and ridiculing the work. They went on in this way until one suddenly fell dead. When Mr. Gillett arrived and the circumstances were related, he said, "There ! there is no doubt that that man has been stricken down by God, and has been sent to hell." His companions were speechless. They could say nothing ; for it was evident that their conduct had brought upon him this awful stroke of Divine indignation.

As the work proceeded, it gathered in nearly the whole population. Nearly every one of the lawyers, merchants, physicians, and the principal men, and nearly all the adult population, were brought in, especially those who belonged to Mr. Gillett's congregation. He said to me, "So far as my congregation is concerned, the millennium is come already ; my people are all converted. Of all my past labours I have not a sermon that is suited at all to my congregation, for they are all Christians." During the twenty days that I spent at Rome there were five hundred conversions.

—During this progress a good deal of excitement sprung up in Utica, and some were disposed to ridicule the work at Rome. Mr. H——, who lived at Rome, was a prominent citizen, and was regarded as standing at the head of society. But he was sceptical ; or he held Unitarian views. He was very moral and respectable, and held

his peculiar views unobtrusively, saying very little about them. The first Sabbath I preached, Mr. H—— was present, and was so astonished at my preaching that he made up his mind that he would not go again. He went home and said : “That man is mad, and I should not be surprised if he set the town on fire.” He stayed away from the meeting for some two weeks. In the meantime the work became so great as to confound his scepticism, and he was in a state of great perplexity.

He was president of a bank in Utica, and used to go down to attend the weekly meeting of directors. On one of these occasions one director began to rally him upon the state of things in Rome, as if they were all running mad there. Mr. H—— remarked, “Gentlemen, say what you will, there is something very remarkable in the state of things in Rome. Certainly no human power or eloquence has produced what we see. I cannot understand it. You say it will soon subside. No doubt the intensity of feeling must soon subside, or the people will become insane. But, gentlemen, there is no accounting for that state of feeling by any philosophy unless there be something Divine in it.”

After Mr. H—— had stayed away from the meeting about two weeks, a few assembled one afternoon to make him a special subject of prayer. When he came into the house, Mr. Gillett whispered as we sat in the pulpit, “Brother Finney, Mr. H—— has come. I hope you will not say anything that will offend him.” “No,” said I, “but I shall not spare him.” In those days I was obliged to preach altogether without premeditation ; for I had not an hour in a week which I could take to arrange my thoughts beforehand.

I chose my subject and preached. The word took a powerful hold ; and, as I hoped and intended, it took a powerful hold of Mr. H——. I think it was that very night, when I requested all who had been converted that day to come and report themselves, Mr. H—— was one who came solemnly forward, and reported himself as having given his heart to God. He appeared humble and penitent, and I have always supposed was truly converted.

The state of things in the neighbourhood was such that no one could come into the village without feeling awe-stricken with the impression that God was there. As an illustration I will relate an incident. The sheriff of the county resided in Utica. There were two court-houses—one at Rome, and the other at Utica ; consequently Sheriff B—— had much business at Rome. He heard of the state of things at Rome ; and, with others, had a good deal of laughing, in the hotel where he boarded, about what they had heard.

But one day it was necessary for him to go to Rome. He said that he was glad to have business there ; for he wanted to see for himself what it was that people talked so much about, and what the state of things really was. He drove on in his one-horse sledge without any particular impression upon his mind, until he crossed the old canal about a mile from the town. He said, as soon as he crossed, a strange impression came over him, an awe so deep that he could not shake it off. He felt as if God pervaded the whole atmosphere. He said that this increased till he came to the village. He stopped at Mr. F——'s hotel, and he observed that the hostler looked just as he himself felt, as if he were afraid to

speak. He went into the house, and found the gentlemen there with whom he had business. He said they were manifestly much impressed; they could hardly attend to business. He said that several times, in the course of the short time he was there, he had to rise from table abruptly and go to the window and look out, and try to divert his attention, to keep from weeping. He observed, he said, that everybody else appeared to feel just as he did. Such an awe, such a solemnity, such a state of things, he had never had any conception of before. He hastened, and returned to Utica; but never to speak lightly of the work at Rome again. A few weeks latter, at Utica, he was hopefully converted.

The means used at Rome were such as I had used before; preaching, public, social, and private prayer, exhortations, and personal conversation. It is difficult to conceive so deep and universal a state of religious feeling, with no instance of disorder, tumult, fanaticism, or anything objectionable, as was witnessed at Rome. There are many converts of that revival, scattered through the land, living to this day; and they can testify that the utmost pains were taken to guard against everything to be deplored.

The Spirit's work was so spontaneous, so powerful, and so overwhelming, as to render it necessary to exercise the greatest caution and wisdom in conducting the meetings, in order to prevent an undesirable outburst of feeling, that soon would have exhausted the sensibility of the people, and brought about a reaction. They kept up a sunrise prayer-meeting for several months; and for more than a year afterwards, at all seasons of the year, that was very fully attended, and

was as full of interest as perhaps a prayer-meeting could be. The moral state of the people was so greatly changed that it did not seem like the same place. Sin was obliged to hide its head ; no open immorality could be tolerated for a moment.

It was on a Saturday that I came from Western to exchange with Mr. Gillett, that I met the church in a prayer-meeting, in their house of worship. I endeavoured to make them understand that God would immediately answer prayer, provided they fulfilled the conditions ; and especially if they believed, in the sense of expecting Him to answer their requests.

I observed that the people were startled with my expression of earnestness and faith in respect to an immediate answer to prayer. I had so often seen this result in prayer that I made the remark without any misgiving. Nothing was said by any of the members of the church ; but I learned after the work had begun that three or four members called at Mr. Gillett's study, and felt so impressed with what had been said that they determined to take God at His word, and see whether He would answer while they were yet speaking. One of them told me afterwards that they had wonderful faith given them by the Spirit of God, to pray for an immediate answer ; and he added, "The answer did come quicker than we could have got an answer from Albany, by the quickest post we could have sent."

The town was full of prayer. Go whither you would, you heard the voice of prayer. Wherever there was a sinner unconverted, especially if he manifested opposition, you would find some two or three brethren or sisters agreeing to make him a particular subject of prayer.

There was the wife of an officer in the United States army residing at Rome, the daughter of a prominent citizen. This lady manifested opposition to the work, said some strong things ; and this led to her being made a particular subject of prayer. This lady was educated, of great force of character, and of strong will ; and of course she made her opposition felt. But almost as soon as this was known, and the spirit of prayer was given for her in particular, the Spirit of God took her case in hand. One evening, perhaps the evening of the very day that the facts came to my knowledge, Mr. Gillett and myself had remained to the very last, conversing with some persons who were deeply bowed down with conviction. As they went away, and we were about to retire, the sexton came hurriedly as we were going out, and said, "There is a lady in yonder pew that cannot get out ; she is helpless." We returned, and lo ! down in the pew was this lady, perfectly overwhelmed with conviction. The pew had been full, and she had attempted to retire with the others ; but as she was the last she found herself unable to stand, and sunk down, and did so without being noticed by those who preceded her. We had some conversation, and found that the Lord had stricken her with unutterable conviction of sin. After praying, and giving her the solemn charge to give her heart immediately to Christ, I left ; and Mr. Gillett helped her home. When she got home she went into a chamber by herself and spent the night—a cold winter night. The next day she expressed hope in Christ, and proved to be soundly converted.

Mrs. Gillett was a sister of the missionary Mills, one of the young men whose zeal led to the organization

of the American Board. She was a beautiful woman, considerably younger than her husband, and his second wife. She had been, before Mr. Gillett married her, under conviction, and had become almost deranged. She had the impression that she was not one of the elect, and that there was no salvation for her. Soon after the revival began in Rome she was powerfully convicted again by the Spirit.

She was a woman of refinement, and fond of dress ; and wore upon her person some trifling ornaments ; nothing, however, that I should have thought of as being any stumbling-block. Being her guest, I conversed repeatedly with her as convictions increased ; but it never occurred to me that her fondness for dress could stand in the way of her being converted. But as the work became so powerful, her distress became alarming ; and Mr. Gillett, knowing what had formerly occurred, felt quite alarmed lest she should get into that state in which she had been before. She threw herself upon me for instruction. She would come to me and beg me to pray for her, and tell me that her distress was more than she could bear. She was evidently going fast to despair ; but I could see that she was depending too much on me ; therefore I tried to avoid her.

It went on thus, until one day I came into the house, and turned into the study. In a few moments, as usual, she was before me, begging me to pray for her, and complaining that there was no salvation for her. I got up abruptly and left her, without praying with her, and saying to her that it was of no use for me to pray for her, that she was depending upon my prayers. When I did so, she sunk down as if she would faint. I left

her alone, notwithstanding, and went abruptly from the study. In a few moments she came rushing into the parlour, with her face all aglow, exclaiming, “Oh, Mr. Finney! I have found the Saviour! Don’t you think that it was the ornaments in my hair that stood in the way of my conversion? As soon as I promised to give them up, the Lord revealed Himself to my soul; and oh! I wonder I have never understood this before. This was really the great difficulty with me before, when I was under conviction, my fondness for dress; and I did not know it.”

CHAPTER XIII.

REVIVAL AT UTICA, NEW YORK.

WHEN I had been at Rome about twenty days, one of the elders of Mr. Aiken's church in Utica, a prominent and useful man, died ; and I went to attend his funeral. Mr. Aiken conducted the funeral ; and I learned that the spirit of prayer was already in that city. He told me that one of his principal women had been so deeply exercised about the state of the church and the ungodly that she prayed for two days and nights, almost incessantly, until her strength was quite overcome ; that she had travail of soul to such an extent that when her own strength was exhausted she could not endure the burden of her mind, unless somebody was engaged in prayer with her, upon whose prayer she could lean—some one who could express her desires to God.

I understood this, and told Mr. Aiken that the work had already begun in her heart. He recognised it ; and wished me to commence labour with him and his people immediately. I did so, and the word took immediate effect, and the place became filled with the influence of the Holy Spirit. Our meetings were crowded, and the work went on powerfully in the two Presbyterian congregations ; of one of which Mr. Aiken was pastor, and Mr. Brace of the other.

Soon after, I observed to Mr. Aiken that Mr. B——, the sheriff, did not attend the meetings. But a few

evenings afterward, Mr. Aiken whispered that Mr. B—— had come. He pointed him out to me, as he made his way up the aisle. I had spoken but a few moments, when I observed Mr. B—— rise, turn deliberately round, wrap his great coat about him, and kneel down. I observed that it excited attention in that part of the house. The sheriff continued on his knees during the service; he then retired to the hotel at which he boarded.

He told me that his mind was greatly burdened when he went home, and brought up the subject to which he had been listening. I had pressed the congregation to accept Christ, just as He was presented in the Gospel. He said that he had treasured up in his mind the points made, and that he presented them solemnly before himself. He said he had thrown himself in agony of mind upon his bed. He made this point with himself, and conjured his soul to accept “now, and here.” Right, there, he said, his distress left him so suddenly that he fell asleep, and did not wake for several hours. When he did awake he found his mind full of peace; and he became an earnest worker for Christ.

The hotel at which he boarded was at that time kept by Mr. S——. The Spirit took powerful hold in that house. Mr. S—— was soon made a subject of prayer, and became converted; and a large number of his family and of his boarders. That largest hotel in the town became a centre of spiritual influence. The stages, as they passed, stopped at the hotel; and so powerful was the impression in the community that I heard of several cases of persons that just stopped for a meal, or to spend a night, being powerfully convicted and con-

verted before they left. Indeed, both in this place and in Rome it was a common remark that nobody could be in the town, or pass through it, without being aware of the presence of God ; that a divine influence seemed to pervade the place, and the whole atmosphere to be instinct with a divine life.

A merchant from Lowville came to Utica to do business. He stopped at the hotel where Mr B—— boarded. He found the whole conversation in the town was such as greatly to annoy him, for he was unconverted. He said he could do no business ; it was all religion ; he could not go into a store but religion was intruded upon him. That evening he would go home.

These remarks had been made in the presence of some young converts who boarded at the hotel, and especially in the presence of Mr. B——. As the stage was expected to leave late, he was observed to go to the bar, just before he retired, to pay his bill ; saying that Mr. S—— would not probably be up when the stage passed through, and he wished therefore to settle his bill before he retired. Mr. S—— said that he observed, while he was settling, that his mind was very much exercised, and he suggested to several of the gentlemen boarders that they should make him a subject of prayer. They took him to Mr. B——'s room, and conversed with him, and prayed with him, and before the stage came he was converted ; and so concerned did he feel immediately about the people of his own place, that when the stage came he went home. He told his family his experience and called them together and prayed with them. As he was a very prominent citizen, and very outspoken, and everywhere proclaiming what the Lord had done

for his soul, it produced a solemn impression in Lowville and resulted in a great revival.

It was in the midst of the revival in Utica that we first heard of opposition that was springing up in the East. Mr. Nettleton wrote some letters to Mr. Aiken, with whom I was labouring ; in which it was manifest that he was much mistaken with regard to the character of these revivals. Mr. Aiken showed me those letters ; and they were handed around among the ministers, as they were intended to be. Among them was one in which Mr. Nettleton stated fully what he regarded as objectionable ; but as no such things as he complained of were done, or had been known, we took no other notice of the letters than let them pass. Mr. Aiken, however, replied privately, assuring Mr. Nettleton that no such things were done. I do not recollect now whether Mr. Nettleton complained that women would sometimes pray in the social meeting. It was true, however, that in a few cases some very prominent women would lead in prayer in the social meetings which we held daily. No opposition was manifested to this, either at Utica or at Rome. I had no agency in introducing the practice, and do not know whether it had existed there before or not. It was not a subject of much conversation or thought in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Weeks was known to be opposed to those revivals. Mr. Weeks held that both sin and holiness were produced in the mind by a direct act of Almighty power ; that God made men sinners or holy at His sovereign discretion, but in both cases by a direct act of Almighty power, an act as irresistible as that of creation itself ; that God was the only proper agent in the universe,

and that all creatures acted as they were compelled to act, by irresistible power.

The work, however, went on with great power, converting all classes, until Mr. Aiken reported the hopeful conversion of five hundred in the course of a few weeks. Revivals were comparatively new in that region; and the people had not become convinced that they were the work of God. They were not awed by them, as they afterwards became. It seemed to be extensively the impression that revivals would soon pass away, and would prove to have been but mere excitement.

One circumstance occurred that made a powerful impression. The Oneida presbytery met there. Among others, there was an aged clergyman who was very much annoyed by the heat and fervour of the revival. He found the public mind absorbed on the subject of religion; that there were prayer and religious conversation everywhere, even in stores and public houses. He had never seen a revival, and had never heard what he heard there.

Before presbytery adjourned, he arose and made a violent speech against the revival, as it was going on. What he said greatly shocked and grieved Christian people. They felt like falling on their faces before God, crying to Him to prevent what had been said from doing mischief.

The presbytery adjourned. Some of the members went home, others remained over night. Christians gave themselves to prayer. The next morning this man was found dead.

In the course of these revivals, persons from a distance, in almost every direction, hearing what the Lord

was doing, or being attracted by curiosity and wonder at what they heard, came to see for themselves ; and many were converted. Among these visitors was Dr. Garnet Judd, who soon after went to the Sandwich Islands as a missionary, and has been well-known to lovers of missions for many years. He belonged to the congregation of Mr. Weeks. His father, Dr. Judd, was an earnest Christian, and sympathized greatly with the revival.

About the same time Miss F—— T——, from New England, came to Utica. She was teaching a high school in the neighbourhood of Newburgh, New York. As much was said in newspapers about revival in Utica, Miss T——, among others, became filled with astonishment, and with a desire to see for herself what it meant. She dismissed her school for ten days, and took the stage for Utica. As she passed through Genesee Street to the hotel, she observed on one of the signs the name of B—— T——. She was an entire stranger in Utica, and did not know that she had an acquaintance or relative there ; but after stopping a day or two, and inquiring who B—— T—— was, she sent a note, saying that the daughter of Mr. T—— was at the hotel, and would be pleased to see him. Mr. T—— waited upon her and found that she was a distant relative of his, and invited her immediately to his house. She accepted his invitation ; and he, being an earnest Christian, immediately took her to the meetings, and tried to interest her in religion. She was greatly surprised at all that she saw, and a good deal annoyed.

She was an energetic, cultivated, and proud young lady ; and the manner in which people conversed with

her, and pressed upon her the necessity of giving her heart to God, very much disturbed her. The preaching which she heard took a deep hold upon her.

I had not seen her, to converse with her ; but had heard of her state of mind. After writhing under the truth for a few days, she called at my lodging. I began to press her with the claims of God. She referred to my preaching that sinners deserved to be sent to hell ; and said that she could not receive it, that she did not believe that God was such a being. I replied, " Nor do you yet understand what sin is, in its true nature and desert ; if you did, you would not complain of God for sending the sinner to hell." I conversed in this strain for some time ; and then I said a few words about the place which Jesus holds, and what is the real situation of things, in regard to the salvation of those who thus deserved to be damned.

Her countenance waxed pale, she threw up her hands and shrieked, and fell forward upon the sofa, and let her heart break. I think she had not wept at all before ; but now the flood-gates were opened, she let her whole gushing heart out before God. She soon arose, and went to her own lodgings. She gave up her school, offered herself as a foreign missionary, was married to Mr. Gulick, and went out to the Sandwich Islands. Her history as a missionary is well known. She has been very efficient, and has raised several sons, who also are missionaries.

I preached frequently in New Hartford, four miles south of Utica. There was a precious and powerful work of grace, a Mr. Coe being pastor of the Presbyterian Church. I preached also at Whitesborough,

another beautiful village, four miles west of Utica ; where also was a powerful revival. The pastor, Mr. John Frost, was a most efficient labourer.

There was a cotton manufactory on the Oriskany Creek, a little above Whitesborough, a place now called New York Mills. It was owned by Mr. W——, unconverted, but a gentleman of high standing and good morals. My brother-in-law, Mr. G—— A——, was superintendent of the factory. I was invited to go, and went up one evening, and preached in the village school-house, which was large, and crowded with hearers. The word took powerful effect among the people, especially among the young, who were at work in the factory.

The next morning I went into the factory to look through it. I observed there was a good deal of agitation among those who were busy at their looms and their mules and other implements. On passing through one of the apartments, where a great number of young women were attending to weaving, I observed a couple of them eyeing me, and speaking very earnestly ; and I could see that they were a good deal agitated, although they laughed. I went slowly towards them. They saw me coming, and were evidently much excited. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread, and her hands trembled so that she could not mend it. I approached slowly, looking at the machinery as I passed ; but this girl grew more and more agitated, and could not proceed with her work. When I came within eight or ten feet of her I looked solemnly at her. She was quite overcome, sunk down, and burst into tears. The impression caught almost like powder, and in a few moments nearly all in the room were in tears. This

feeling spread through the factory. Mr. W——, the owner, was present, and seeing the state of things, he said to the superintendent, "Stop the mill, and let the people attend to religion ; for it is more important that our souls should be saved than that this factory run." The gate was shut down, and the factory stopped ; but where should we assemble ? The superintendent suggested that the mule room was large ; and the mules being run up, we could assemble there. We did so, and a more powerful meeting I scarcely ever attended. It went on with great power. The revival went through the mill with astonishing power ; and in the course of a few days nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted.

As much has been said about the hopeful conversion of Theodore D. Weld, at Utica, it may be well for me to give a correct report of the facts. He had an aunt, Mrs. C——, living in Utica, who was a praying, godly woman. He was the son of an eminent clergyman in New England, and his aunt thought he was a Christian. He used to lead her family in worship. Before the commencement of the revival he had become a member of Hamilton College, at Clinton. The work at Utica had attracted so much attention that many persons from Clinton, and among the rest some of the professors of the college, had been down to Utica, and had reported what was doing ; and a good deal of excitement had resulted. Weld held a very prominent place among the students of Hamilton College, and had a very great influence. Hearing what was going on at Utica, he became very much excited, and his opposition was greatly aroused.

This fact became known in Utica ; and his aunt became very anxious. His aunt wrote to him, and asked

him to come home and spend a Sabbath, hear the preaching, and become interested in the work. He at first declined, but finally got some of the students together, and told them that he had made up his mind to go down to Utica ; that he knew it must be fanaticism or enthusiasm ; that it would not move him. He came, and his aunt soon learned that he did not intend to hear me preach. Mr. Aiken had usually occupied the pulpit in the morning, and he expected Mr. Aiken to preach ; but he was determined not to hear me.

Mr. Aiken suggested that I should preach in the morning. Mr. Aiken took the introductory exercises, as usual. Mrs. C—— came with her family, and among them Mr. Weld. She took pains to have him so seated than he could not well get out, without herself and one or two others stepping out before him ; for she feared that he would go out when he saw that I was to preach. I knew that his influence among the young men of Utica was very great, and that his coming there would have a powerful influence to make them band together in opposition. Mr. Aiken pointed him out to me as he came in and took his seat.

After the introductory exercises, I named this text : “One sinner destroyeth much good.” I had never preached from it, or heard it preached from ; but it came home with great power to my mind. I began to show how one sinner might destroy much good, and how the influence of one man might destroy a great many souls. I suppose that I drew a pretty vivid picture of Weld, and of what his influence was, and what mischief he might do. Once or twice he made an effort to get out ; but his aunt would throw herself forward, and lean

in front, and engage in silent prayer, and he could not get out without arousing and annoying her ; and therefore he remained in his seat till meeting was out.

The next day I called at a store in Genesee Street, to converse with some people, as it was my custom to go from place to place for conversation ; and whom should I find there but Weld ! He fell upon me very uncere- moniously, and I should think, for nearly or quite an hour, talked to me in a most abusive manner. I got an opportunity to say but very little. He was very gifted in language. It soon attracted the attention of all in the store, the news ran along the streets, the clerks gathered in from the neighbouring stores, and stood to hear what he had to say. All business ceased in the store, and all gave themselves up to listening to his vituperation. But finally I said, "Mr. Weld, are you the son of a minister of Christ, and is this the way for you to behave ?" I said a few words in that direction, and I saw that it stung him ; and throwing out something very severe, he immediately left.

I went out also, and returned to Mr. Aiken's. I had been there but a few moments when somebody called, and I went to the door myself ; and who should come in but Mr. Weld ! He look as if he would sink. He began immediately to make apology for the manner in which he had treated me ; and expressed himself in terms of self-condemnation. I took him kindly by the hand and had a little conversation with him, assured him that I had laid up nothing against him, and exhorted him earnestly to give his heart to God.

That evening I preached at New Hartford. The next morning I heard that he went to his aunt's, greatly

impressed and subdued. She asked him to pray in the family; he said that he was at first shocked at the idea; but his enmity arose so much that he thought that that was one way in which he had not yet expressed opposition, and therefore he would comply. He knelt down, and kept on in a most wonderful way, until they all became convulsed with astonishment. His aunt attempted to converse with him, and to pray with him; but the opposition of his heart was terrible.

He walked his room by turns, and by turns he lay upon the floor. He continued the whole night in that terrible state, angry, rebellious, and yet so convicted that he could scarcely live. Just at daylight, while walking back and forth in his room, he said a pressure came upon him that crushed him down to the floor; and with it came a voice that seemed to command him to repent, to repent now.

The next night he rose in meeting, and asked if he might make confession. I answered, Yes; and he made public confession. He said it became him to remove the stumbling-block which he had cast before the whole people; and he wanted opportunity to make the most public confession he could.

From that time he became a very efficient helper; and being a powerful speaker, and gifted in prayer, he was instrumental in doing a great deal of good. At length his health became enfeebled by labour. He went on a fishing excursion to the coast of Labrador. He returned with health renewed.

This revival occurred in the winter and summer of 1826. When the converts had been received into the churches throughout the country, Rev. John Frost,

pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Whitesborough, published a pamphlet giving some account of the revival, and stated that within the bounds of that presbytery the converts numbered three thousand. The work spread from Rome to Utica, as from a centre. Ministers came from a considerable distance, and spent more or less time in attending meetings, and in various ways helping forward the work. I spread my own labours over as large a field as I could, and laboured more or less throughout the bounds of the presbytery. The pastors of all these churches sympathised deeply with the work.

The doctrines preached in these revivals were the same that have been already presented. Instead of telling sinners to use the means of grace, pressed the duty of instant surrender. We told them the Spirit was striving with them to induce them now to give Him their hearts, now to believe, and to enter at once upon a life of devotion to Christ. We taught them that while they were praying for the Holy Spirit, they were constantly resisting Him; and that if they would at once yield to their own convictions of duty they would be Christians. We tried to show them that everything they did or said before they had submitted, believed, given their hearts to God, was sin; was not that which God required them to do, but was simply deferring repentance and resisting the Holy Ghost.

Such teaching as this was opposed by many. It had formerly been supposed necessary that a sinner should remain under conviction; and it was not uncommon to hear old professors say that they were under conviction many months, or years, before they found relief. We

taught the opposite of this. We told them that under long conviction, they were in danger of grieving the Spirit away, and when their distress of mind ceased, a reaction would naturally take place.

We insisted on immediate submission as the only thing that God could accept; and that all delay was rebellion. It became very common, under this teaching, for persons to be convicted and converted in the course of a few hours, and sometimes in the course of a few minutes. Such sudden conversions were alarming to many good people; and they predicted that the converts would fall away. But the event proved that among those sudden conversions were some of the most influential Christians that ever have been known in that region; and this has been in accordance with my experience through all my ministry.

CHAPTER XIV.

REVIVAL AT AUBURN IN 1826.

DR. LANSING, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church at Auburn, came to Utica to witness the revival, and urged me to go and labour for a time with him. In the summer of 1826 I went and laboured with him for a season. I found that some of the professors in the theological seminary were taking an attitude hostile to the revival. I had before known that ministers east of Utica were holding correspondence with reference to these revivals, and taking an attitude of hostility.

However, until I arrived at Auburn, I was not fully aware of the amount of opposition I was destined to meet, from ministers where I had not laboured, and knew personally nothing of me, but were influenced by false reports. I learned from various sources that a system of espionage was carried on that was intended to result in an extensive union of ministers and churches to hedge me in, and prevent the spread of revivals.

I return to what passed at Auburn. My mind became very much impressed with the extensive working of that system of espionage of which I have spoken. Mr. Frost, of Whitesborough, had a knowledge of the facts, and communicated them to me. I said nothing, publicly or privately, to anybody, but gave myself to prayer. I looked to God, with great earnestness, to be directed,

asking Him to show me the path of duty, and give me grace to ride out the storm.

One day, at Dr. Lansing's, the Lord showed me, as in a vision, what was before me. He drew so near to me, while I was engaged in prayer, that my flesh literally trembled on my bones. I shook from head to foot, under a full sense of the presence of God. At first, and for some time, it seemed more like being on the top of Sinai, amidst its full thunderings, than in the presence of the cross of Christ.

Never in my life was I so awed and humbled before God as then. Nevertheless, instead of feeling like fleeing, I seemed drawn nearer and nearer to God—seemed to draw nearer and nearer to that Presence that filled me with such unutterable awe and trembling. After a season of great humiliation before Him, there came a great lifting up. God assured me that He would be with me and uphold me; that no opposition should prevail; that I had nothing to do, in regard to all this matter, but to keep about my work, and wait for the salvation of God.

The sense of God's presence, and all that passed between God and my soul at that time, I can never describe. It led me to be perfectly trustful, perfectly calm, and to have nothing but the most perfectly kind feeling toward all brethren that were misled, and were arraying themselves against me. I felt assured that all would come right; that my true course was to leave everything to God; and as the storm gathered and the opposition increased, I never for one moment doubted how it would result. I was never disturbed, I never spent a waking hour in thinking of it; when to all out-

ward appearance it seemed as if all the churches, except where I had laboured, would unite to shut me out of their pulpits.

A passage in the twentieth of Jeremiah was repeatedly set home upon me with great power. It reads thus: "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived" (in the margin it reads, "enticed"): "Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the defaming of many, and fear was on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O Lord of Hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see Thy vengeance on them: for unto Thee have I opened my cause."—Jer. xx. 7-12.

I do not mean that this literally described my case or expressed my feelings; but there was so much similarity that this passage was often a support to my soul.

Those who are acquainted with the history of Mr.

Weeks, recollect that he began to write a book which he called "The Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century." He was a man of considerable talent, and I hope a good man; but, as I think, much deluded in his philosophy, and exceedingly out of the way in theology. I do not mention him because I wish to say any evil of him, or of his book; but merely to say that he never ceased, so far as I can learn, to offer more or less opposition, direct and indirect, to revivals that did not favour his peculiar views.

Notwithstanding the attitude that some of the professors at Auburn were taking, in connection with so many ministers abroad, the Lord soon revived His work in Auburn. Mr. Lansing had a large congregation, and a very intelligent one. The revival soon took effect among the people, and became powerful.

At that time Dr. S——, of Auburn, who still resides there, was so greatly blessed in his soul as to become quite another man. Dr. S—— was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. He was a very timid and doubting Christian; and had but little Christian efficiency, because he had but little faith. He soon, however, became deeply convicted of sin; and descended into the depths of humiliation, almost to despair. He continued in this state for weeks, until one night, in a prayer-meeting, he was quite overcome, and sunk helpless on the floor. Then God opened his eyes to the reality of salvation in Christ. Dr. S—— followed me to Troy, and the first time I saw him there, he exclaimed with an emphasis peculiarly his own, "Brother Finney, they have buried the Saviour, but Christ is risen." He received such a wonderful baptism of the Holy Ghost

that he has been ever since the rejoicing and the wonder of God's people.

Partly in consequence of the known disapproval of my labours on the part of many ministers, a good deal of opposition sprung up in Auburn; and a number of the leading men took strong ground against the work; but the Spirit of the Lord was among the people with great power.

One Sabbath morning, while preaching, I was describing the manner in which some would oppose their families, and, if possible, prevent their being converted. I said, "Probably, if I were acquainted with you, I could call some of you by name who treat your families in this manner." At this instant a man cried out, "Name me!" and then threw his head forward; and he trembled with emotion. It turned out that that morning he had done the same things I had named. His crying out, "Name me!" was so spontaneous and irresistible that he could not help it; but I fear he was never converted.

There was a hatter, of the name of H——, in Auburn. His wife was a Christian; but he was a Universalist. He carried his opposition so far as to forbid his wife attending our meetings; and for several successive evenings she remained at home. One night, as the warning bell rang half an hour before the assembly met, Mrs. H—— was so much exercised in mind about her husband that she retired for prayer, and spent the half hour in pouring out her soul to God. She told Him how her husband behaved, and that he would not let her attend meeting; and she drew very near to God.

As the bell was tolling she came out of her closet and found that her husband had come in; and, as he entered the room, he asked if she would go to meeting; and said that if she would, he would accompany her. He had made up his mind to attend meeting that night, to see if he could not get something to justify his opposition; or at least something to laugh about, and sustain him in ridiculing the work. When he proposed to accompany his wife, she was much surprised, but they came to meeting.

Of all this, I knew nothing at the time. I had been visiting and labouring with inquirers the whole day, and had had no time to even settle upon a text. During the introductory services a text occurred—the words of the man with the unclean spirit, “Let us alone.” I took those words and went on to preach, and endeavoured to show up the conduct of those that wanted to be let alone, that did not want to have anything to do with Christ.

In the midst of my discourse I observed a person fall from his seat, who cried out in a most terrific manner. The congregation were much shocked; and the outcry of the man was so great that I stopped preaching and stood still. After a few moments, I requested the congregation to sit still while I should go down and speak with the man. I found him to be Mr. H——. The Spirit of the Lord had powerfully convicted him. When I reached him he had so far recovered strength as to be on his knees, with his head on his wife’s lap. He was weeping aloud, confessing his sins, and accusing himself in a terrible manner. When I told the congregation who it was, they knew him and his character; and it

produced tears and sobs in every part of the house. I stood for some time, to see if he would be quiet enough for me to go on; but his loud weeping rendered it impossible. I can never forget the appearance of his wife as she sat and held his face in her hands. There appeared in her face a holy joy and triumph that words cannot express.

We had several prayers, and then I dismissed the meeting, and some persons helped Mr. H—— to his house. He wished them to send for certain companions with whom he had been in the habit of ridiculing the work of the Lord. He could not rest until he had sent for a great number, and had made confession, which he did with a very broken heart.

He was so overcome that for two or three days he could not get about town, and continued to send for such as he wished to see, that he might confess, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come. As soon as he was able to get about, he took hold of the work with the utmost humility, but with great earnestness. Soon after he was made an elder, and he has ever since been very exemplary and useful. His conversation was so marked and powerful, and the results were so manifest, that it did very much to silence opposition.

While at Auburn, I preached more or less in the neighbouring churches; and the revival spread to Cayuga, and to Skeneateles. This was in the summer and autumn of 1826.

At Auburn my wife and myself were the guests of Dr. Lansing, the pastor of the church. The church was much conformed to the world, and was accused by the unconverted of leading in dress, fashion, and worldliness.

I directed my preaching to secure reformation, and to get them into a revival state. One Sabbath I had preached as searchingly as I was able, to the church, in regard to their attitude before the world. The word took deep hold of the people.

At the close of my address I called upon the pastor to pray. He was much impressed with the sermon, and instead of immediately engaging in prayer, he made a short but very earnest address to the church, confirming what I had said. At this moment a man in the gallery said in a deliberate manner, "Mr. Lansing, I do not believe that such remarks from you can do any good while you wear a ruffled shirt and a gold ring, and while your wife and the ladies of your family sit, as they do, before the congregation, dressed as leaders in the fashions of the day." It seemed as if this would kill Dr. Lansing outright. He made no reply, but cast himself across the side of the pulpit and wept. The congregation was almost as much shocked and affected as himself. They almost universally dropped their heads upon the seat in front of them, and many of them wept. I offered a short prayer and dismissed the congregation.

I went home with the dear, wounded pastor, and when all the family were returned, he took the ring from his finger—it was a slender gold ring that could hardly attract notice—and said his first wife, when upon her dying bed, took it from her finger and placed it upon his, with a request that he should wear it for her sake.

He had done so, without a thought of its being a stumbling-block. Of his ruffles, he said he had worn them from childhood, and did not think of them as anything improper. Indeed, he could not remember

when he began to wear them, and of course thought nothing about them. "But," said he, "if these things are an occasion of offence to any, I will not wear them." He was a precious Christian, and an excellent pastor.

Almost immediately after this, the church was disposed to make to the world a public confession of backsliding, and want of Christian spirit. Accordingly a confession was drawn up, covering the whole ground. It was submitted for approval, and then read before the congregation. The church members stood, many of them weeping, while the confession was read. From this point the work went forward with increased power.

CHAPTER XV.

REVIVAL AT TROY AND AT NEW LEBANON.

EARLY in the autumn of 1826, I accepted an invitation from Dr. Beman and his session to labour in Troy; and the revival was powerful in that city.

In this revival there was a very earnest spirit of prayer. We had a prayer-meeting from house to house, daily, at eleven o'clock. At one of those meetings I recollect that Mr. S——, cashier of a bank in that city, was so pressed by the spirit of prayer that when the meeting was dismissed he was unable to rise from his knees. He remained upon his knees, writhed and groaned in agony, and said, "Pray for Mr. ——," president of the bank of which he was cashier. This president was a wealthy, unconverted man. When it was seen that his soul was in travail for that man, the praying people knelt down and wrestled in prayer for his conversion. As soon as the mind of Mr. S—— was so relieved that he could go home, we all retired; and soon after the president of the bank for whom we prayed expressed hope in Christ. He had not before this, I believe, attended any of the meetings; and it was not known that he was concerned about salvation.

The father of Judge C——, who was at Albany with me, was living with his son, whose guest I was. The old gentleman had been a judge in Vermont. He was remarkably correct in his life, a venerable man, whose

house in Vermont had been the home of ministers who visited the place. His wife had told me of her anxiety, and his son repeatedly expressed fear that his father's natural amiability would ruin his soul.

One Sabbath morning the Holy Spirit opened the case to my apprehension, and showed me how to reach it. In a few moments I had the whole subject in my mind. I went down and told the lady and her son what I was about to do, and exhorted them to pray earnestly. I followed out the divine showing, and the word took such powerful hold that he spent a sleepless night of anguish. He soon became clearly converted, and lived a Christian to the end.

Before I left Troy, Miss S——, from New Lebanon, in Columbia county, came to purchase a dress for a ball which she wished to attend. She had a young relative in Troy, who was numbered among the converts, and was a zealous Christian. She invited Miss S—— to attend the meetings. This aroused the enmity of her heart; but before she left she was thoroughly converted.

As soon as her eyes were opened, she went home and began her labours for a revival. Religion in New Lebanon was in a very low state. The young people were nearly all unconverted; and the old members were in a cold, inefficient state. Miss S——'s father had become formal; and for a long time religious matters had been neglected. They had an aged minister, a good man, but a man that did not seem to know how to perform revival work.

Miss S—— first began at home, and besought her father to give up his "old prayer," as she expressed it,

and wake up, and be engaged in religion. As she was a great favourite, her conversion and conversation greatly affected him. He was soon aroused, and became another man, and felt deeply that they must have a revival. The daughter went also to the house of her pastor, and began with a daughter of his who was in her sins. She was soon converted; and they two united in prayer, and went from house to house, in stirring up the people.

In the course of a week or two there was so much interest excited that Miss S—— came out herself to Troy to beg me to go, requested to do so by the pastor and members of the church. I went and preached. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out, and the revival soon went forward with power. Striking conversions were multiplied, and a great and blessed change came over the whole place.

We heard but little of opposition at this place during the revival, especially from professors of religion. Everything seemed to go on harmoniously in the church. They were soon led to feel that they greatly needed revival, and seemed to be very thankful that God had visited them. Most of the prominent men in the community were converted.

Among these was Dr. W——, who was said to be an infidel. He at first manifested hostility, and declared that the people were mad; but he was made a particular subject of prayer by some who laid hold upon his case, and who had faith that he would soon be converted. One Sunday he came to meeting, and I could see that those who felt for him were burdened. Their heads were down and they were in a prayerful state during

the sermon. It was plain, however, before night, that the doctor's opposition began to give way. He listened, and that night he spent in a deeply exercised state of mind. The next morning he called on me, subdued like a child, and confessed that he had been wrong. From that day he took hold of the work and went forward with all his might.

There was also Mr. T——, a merchant, probably the most prominent and wealthy citizen of the town, but a sceptic. One evening I preached on "The carnal mind is enmity against God." He had been a very moral man; and it had been very difficult to fasten anything upon his mind that would convict him of sin. His wife was a Christian, and the Lord had converted his daughter. The state of things in the town and in his family had so far interested him that he would come to meeting and hear what was said. The next day after this sermon on moral depravity he confessed himself convinced. He saw it was all true, and assured me his mind was made up to serve the Lord the rest of his life.

John T. Avery, a noted evangelist, who has laboured in many places for many years, was present at that meeting. His family lived in New Lebanon. He was at this time a lad, fifteen or sixteen years of age. The morning after that sermon was preached, he came to me, one of the most interesting youthful converts that I have ever seen. He told me what had been passing in his mind for days; and added, "I was completely rolled up in the sermon, and it carried me right along. I could understand it. I gave up; I gave all to Christ."

CHAPTER XVI.

REVIVAL IN STEPHENTOWN.

AFTER remaining a short time in New Lebanon, soon after this, on the Sabbath, as I came out of the pulpit, a young lady from Stephentown was introduced to me. She asked me if I could not go to their town and preach. I replied that I did not see that I could. I saw her utterance was choked with deep feeling; but as I had not time to converse with her then, I went to my lodging.

Afterward I made inquiry about Stephentown, a place north of, and adjoining New Lebanon. Many years before, a wealthy individual had died, and given to the Presbyterian Church a fund, the interest of which was sufficient to support a pastor. Soon after, Mr. B——, who had been a chaplain in the Revolutionary army, was settled as pastor. He remained until the church ran down, and finally became an open infidel. This had produced a most disastrous influence in that town. He remained among them, openly hostile to the Christian religion.

After he had ceased to be pastor, one or two ministers settled. Nevertheless, the church declined, and grew worse and worse; until, finally, they left their meeting-house and held services in a small school-house, which stood near.

The last minister affirmed that he stayed until not

more than half-a-dozen people would attend; and although his salary was regularly paid, yet he could not think it his duty to spend time in such a field. He had therefore been dismissed. No other denomination had taken possession, so as to excite public interest, and the town was a complete moral waste. Three elders of the Presbyterian Church remained, and about twenty members. The only unmarried person in the church was Miss S——, of whom I have spoken. It was a large, rich, farming town, with no considerable village in it.

On the next Sabbath Miss S—— met me again, begged me to go and preach, and asked if I knew anything of the state of things there. I informed her that I did; but told her I did not know how I could go. She seemed greatly affected—too much to converse. My mind began to be profoundly stirred in respect to the state of things in Stephentown. I finally told her that if the elders of the church desired me to come, she might have a notice given out that I would, the Lord willing, preach the next Sabbath at five o'clock in the afternoon. She went home and had the notice given.

The next Sabbath, one of the young converts at New Lebanon offered to take me to Stephentown. When he came in his buggy, I asked, "Have you a steady horse?" "Oh yes!" he replied, "perfectly so;" and smiling, asked, "What made you ask the question?" "Because," I replied, "if the Lord wants me to go to Stephentown, the devil will prevent it if he can; and if you have not a steady horse, he will try to make him kill me." He smiled, and we rode on; and strange to tell, before we got there, that horse ran away twice, and came

near killing us. His owner expressed the greatest astonishment, and said he had never known such a thing before.

In due time we arrived at Mr. S——'s, about half a mile from the church, in the direction of New Lebanon. As we went in, Maria tearfully, yet joyfully, received us, and showed me to a room where I could be alone. Soon after I heard her praying in a room overhead. The congregation was solemn and attentive, but nothing very particular occurred that evening. I spent the night at Mr. S——'s, and Maria seemed to be praying over my room nearly all night. I could hear her low, trembling voice, interrupted by sobs and weeping. I had made no appointment to come again; but before I left in the morning, she pleaded so hard that I consented to have an appointment made for the next Sabbath.

When I came on the next Sabbath, nearly the same things occurred; but the congregation was more crowded; and as the house was old, for fear the galleries would break down, they had been strongly propped during the week. I could see an increase of solemnity and interest. At the third service the Spirit of God was poured out on the congregation.

Judge P—— lived in one part of the town, who had a large family unconverted. At the close of the service Miss S—— stepped up and pointed to a pew in which sat a young woman greatly overcome. I went in to speak to her, and found her to be one of the daughters of Judge P——. Her convictions were very deep. I sat down by her and gave her instructions; and I think before she left the house she was converted. She was a very intelligent, earnest young woman, and became very

useful. She was afterwards the wife of the evangelist underwood, well known in New Jersey and New England. She and Miss S—— seemed immediately to unite their prayers; but I could not see, as yet, much movement among the older members. They stood in such relations to each other, that a good deal of repentance and confession had to pass among them, as a condition of their getting into the work.

The state of things in Stephentown demanded that I should take up my quarters there. The spirit of prayer in the meantime had come powerfully upon me, as had been the case with Miss S——. The praying power spreading and increasing, the work took on a very powerful type; so that the word of the Lord would cut the strongest men down, and render them entirely helpless.

I was preaching on the text, "God is love." There was a man of the name of J——, a man of strong nerves and of considerable prominence as a farmer, in the town. He sat almost immediately before me; he fell, and writhed in agony for a few moments; but afterwards became still, and nearly motionless, but entirely helpless. He remained in this state until the meeting was out, when he was taken home. He was very soon converted, and became an effective worker.

In the course of this revival, Zebulon R. Shipherd, a celebrated lawyer from Washington county, New York, being in attendance upon the court at Albany, and hearing of the revival at Stephentown, so disposed of his business as to come and labour with me. He was an earnest Christian, attended all the meetings, and enjoyed them greatly. He was there when the November elec-

tions occurred through the State. I looked forward to the election day with considerable solicitude, fearing that the excitement of the day would greatly retard the work.

On the evening of election day, when I came out of the pulpit, Mr Shipherd—who was the father of Rev. J. J. Shipherd, who afterwards established Oberlin—beckoned to me from a pew to come to him. I went, and found one of the gentlemen who had sat at the table to receive votes during the day so overcome with conviction of sin as to be unable to leave his seat. I had some conversation with him, prayed with him, and he was manifestly converted. A considerable portion of the congregation had, in the meantime, sat down. As I was about to retire, my attention was called to another pew, where was another of those men who had been prominent at the election, precisely in the same condition of mind. He was too much overpowered by feeling to leave the house. I conversed with him also; and he was converted before he left.

I mentioned the family of Mr. P—— as large; there were sixteen members, children and grandchildren, hopefully converted; all of whom, I think, united with the church before I left. There was another family in the town, of the name of M——, also large and very influential. Most of the people lived scattered along a street which was about five miles in length. There was not a religious family on that whole street, and not a single house in which family prayer was maintained.

I made an appointment to preach in a school-house in that street, and the house was much crowded. I

took for my text: "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." The Lord gave me a clear view of the subject, and I was enabled to bring out the truth effectively. The town was in an awful state. The influence of Mr. B——, their former minister, now an infidel, had borne its legitimate fruit; and there was but very little conviction of the truth and reality of religion left. This meeting resulted in the conviction of nearly all that were present. The revival spread; and in this M—— family there were seventeen hopeful conversions.

But there were several families who were quite prominent in influence who did not attend the meetings; they were so much under the influence of Mr. B——. However, in the midst of this revival, Mr. B—— died a horrible death; and this put an end to his opposition.

There were several families that did not attend the meeting; and I could devise no means by which they could be induced to attend. Miss S—— came up to Stephentown; and as her father was a man very well known and very much respected, she was received with respect and deference in any family that she wished to visit. She called on one of these families; she was acquainted with their daughters, and induced them to accompany her to meeting. They soon became so interested that they needed no influence to persuade them to attend. She then went to another, with the same result; and finally secured the attendance of all that had stayed away. These were nearly, or quite, all converted before I left. Indeed, nearly all the principal inhabitants were gathered into the church,

and the town was morally renovated. I have never been there since 1827; but the revival produced permanent results.

The striking characteristics of this revival were a mighty spirit of prevailing prayer; overwhelming conviction of sin; sudden and powerful conversions to Christ; great love and abounding joy of the converts, and their great earnestness, activity, and usefulness in prayers and labours for others. I have seldom laboured in a revival with greater comfort to myself, or with less opposition, than in Stephentown. At first the people chafed a little under the preaching; but with such power was it set home by the Holy Spirit that I soon heard no more complaint.

CHAPTER XVII.

REVIVALS AT WILMINGTON AND AT PHILADELPHIA.

WHILE I was labouring at New Lebanon, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert, of Wilmington, Delaware, came on a visit. Mr. Gilbert was very old-school in theological views, but love of souls overruled all difficulty on nice questions of difference between himself and myself. He heard me preach, saw the results ; and was very earnest that I should aid him at Wilmington.

I went to Wilmington, and engaged in labours with Mr. Gilbert. I found that his teaching had placed the church in a position that rendered it impossible to promote a revival till their views could be corrected. They seemed afraid to make any effort, lest they should take the work out of the hands of God. Their theory was that God would convert sinners in His own time ; and that to urge them to immediate repentance was to attempt to make men Christians by human agency, and thus to dishonour God. In their prayers there was no urgency for an immediate outpouring of the Spirit.

It was plain that nothing could be done unless Mr. Gilbert's views could be changed. I therefore spent hours each day in conversing with him ; and after two or three weeks his mind was prepared to have my own views brought before his people. The next Sabbath I took for my text : " Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit ; for why will ye die ? " I went thoroughly

into the subject of the sinner's responsibility ; and showed what a new heart is not, and what it is. I preached about two hours.

The congregation became interested, numbers rose, and the house was completely filled. Some looked distressed and offended, others interested. When I brought out strongly the contrast between my views and the views in which they had been instructed, some laughed, some wept, some were manifestly angry ; but I do not recollect that any left. It was a strange excitement.

In the meantime, Mr. Gilbert moved from one end of the sofa to the other in the pulpit. I could hear him breathe and sigh, and could not help observing that he was himself in the greatest anxiety. However, I knew I had him, in his convictions, fast ; but whether he would make up his mind to withstand what would be said by his people, I did not know. I was preaching to please the Lord, and not man.

I did not call upon Mr. Gilbert to pray ; but prayed myself that the Lord would set home the Word, and make it understood. The congregation withdrew very slowly, and many seemed to be standing and waiting, as if they supposed they should hear from Mr. Gilbert upon what had been said.

I observed two ladies sitting on the left hand of the aisle to whom I had been introduced, and who I knew were friends and supporters of Mr. Gilbert. I saw that they looked grieved and offended and astonished. The first, who was near, took hold of Mr. Gilbert, and said, "Mr. Gilbert, what do you think of that ?" in a loud whisper. He replied, "It is worth five hundred dollars." That gratified and affected me. She replied,

“Then you have never preached the Gospel.” “Well,” said he, “I am sorry to say I never have.” We passed along, and then the other lady said about the same things, and received a similar reply. That was enough. Those who had gone out were standing, many of them, in front of the house, discussing vehemently the things that had been said. As I passed along the streets I found excitement and discussion. People were comparing views; and from the few words that escaped as I passed, I saw the impression was in favour of what had been said.

When I arrived at Mr. Gilbert’s, his wife accosted me as soon as I entered, “Mr. Finney, how dared you preach any such thing in our pulpit?” I replied, “Mrs. Gilbert, I did not dare to preach anything else; it is the truth of God.” She replied, “Well, it is true that God was in justice bound to make an atonement for mankind. I have always felt it, though I never dared to say it. I believed that if the doctrine preached by Mr. Gilbert was true, God was under obligation, as a matter of justice, to make an atonement, and to save me from those circumstances in which it was impossible for me to help myself, and from a condemnation which I did not deserve.”

Just at this moment Mr. Gilbert entered. “There,” said I, “Brother Gilbert, you see the results of your preaching here in your own family;” and then repeated to him what his wife had just said. He replied, “I have sometimes thought that my wife was one of the most pious women; and at other times I have thought that she had no religion.” “Why!” I exclaimed, “she has always thought that God owed her, as a matter

of justice, the salvation provided in Christ ; how can she be a Christian ? ” This was all said, by each, with the greatest solemnity. Upon my making the last remark, she got up and left the room. The house was very solemn ; and for two days I did not see her. She then came out clear, having passed through a complete revolution.

From this point the work went forward ; the truth was worked out admirably by the Holy Spirit. Mr. Gilbert’s views remained corrected.

The effect on many of Mr. Gilbert’s church members was peculiar. I have spoken of the lady who asked him what he thought of it. She told me that she was so offended, to think that her views of religion were so overthrown, that she promised she would never pray again. She had been in the habit of so far justifying herself because of her sinful nature, and had taken such a position as Mrs. Gilbert had held, that my preaching on that subject had completely subverted her views, her religion, and all. She remained in this state of rebellion for some six weeks. She then broke down and became thoroughly changed ; and this, I believe, was the case with a large number.

I had been induced to go up and preach for Mr. Patterson, at Philadelphia, twice each week. I went in the evening, and returned the next day and preached at Wilmington ; thus alternating my evening services between Wilmington and Philadelphia. The distance was about forty miles. The word took so much effect in Philadelphia as to convince me that it was my duty to leave Mr. Gilbert to carry on the work in Wilmington, while I gave my whole time to Philadelphia.

Rev. James Patterson, with whom I first laboured in Philadelphia, held the views of the old-school Presbyterians; but he was a godly man, and cared more for the salvation of souls than for nice questions, or any points of doctrine upon which the old and new school differ. His wife believed in a general, as opposed to a restricted, atonement, and agreed with what was called New England orthodoxy, as distinguished from Princeton orthodoxy.

There were some cases of bitter opposition. One man, whose wife was deeply convicted, was so enraged that he came and took his wife out of meeting by force. Another case, a very striking one, was of a German tobacconist. He had a very amiable and intelligent wife, and was himself intelligent. He was, however, a sceptic. His wife came to our meetings, and became concerned about her soul; and after a struggle of many days, was thoroughly converted. As she attended frequently, it attracted the attention of her husband, and he began to oppose. He had a hasty temper, and was a man of athletic frame, and of great resolution and fixedness of purpose. As his wife became more interested, his opposition increased, till finally he forbade her attending meetings any more.

She then called to see me, and asked advice. I told her that her first obligation was to God; that she was undoubtedly under obligation to obey His commands, even if they conflicted with the commands of her husband; and that, while I advised her to avoid giving offence, and do her duty to God, still in no case to omit what she regarded as duty to God. I told her that as her husband was an infidel, his opinions were not to be

respected, and that she could not safely follow his advice. She was well aware of this. He was a man that paid no attention to religion, except to oppose it.

In accordance with my advice, she attended the meetings and received instruction, and soon came into the liberty of the Gospel, had great faith and peace, and enjoyed much of the presence of God. This highly displeased her husband; and he finally went so far as to threaten her life if she went to meeting again. She had so frequently seen him angry, that she had no confidence that he would fulfil his threat. She told him calmly, that whatever it cost her, her mind was made up to do her duty to God; that she felt it her duty to avail herself of the opportunity to get the instruction needed; and that she must attend those meetings, whenever she could do it without neglecting her family.

One Sabbath evening, when he found she was going to meeting, he renewed his threat that if she went he would take her life. She told me afterwards that she had no thought that it was anything but a vain threat. She calmly replied to him that her duty was plain; that there was no reason why she should remain at home, but simply to comply with his unreasonable wishes; and that to stay under such circumstances would be entirely inconsistent with her duty to God and to herself. When she returned from meeting she found him in a great rage. As soon as she entered the door he locked it, took out the key, and then drew a dagger and swore he would take her life. She ran up-stairs; he caught a light to follow. The servant girl blew out the light as he passed by her. She ran up and through the rooms in the second

story, found her way down into the kitchen, and then to the cellar. He could not follow in the dark ; and she got out of the cellar window, and went to a friend's house and spent the night.

Taking it for granted that he would be ashamed of his rage before morning, she went home early, and found things in the greatest disorder. He had broken the furniture, and acted like a man distracted. He again locked the door, and drawing a dagger, he threw himself upon his knees and held up his hands, and took the most horrible oath that he would there take her life. She looked at him with astonishment, and ran up-stairs, but he followed her. She ran from room to room, till finally she entered the last, from which there was no escape. She turned round and faced him. She threw herself upon her knees, as he was about to strike her with his dagger, and lifted up her hands to heaven, and cried for mercy upon herself and upon him. At this point God arrested him. She said he looked at her for a moment, dropped his dagger, and fell upon the floor and cried for mercy for himself. He then and there broke down, confessed his sins to God and to her ; and begged God, and begged her, to forgive him.

From that moment he was a wonderfully changed man. He became one of the most earnest converts. He was greatly attached to myself ; and some year or two after, he was the first in Philadelphia that met and greeted me. I received him and his wife into the church before I left, and baptised their children. I have not seen or heard from them for many years.

While there were individual cases of singular bitterness and opposition, still I was not annoyed or hindered by

public opposition. The ministers received me kindly; and in no instance did they speak publicly, if indeed they did privately, against the work.

After preaching in Mr. Patterson's church for several months, and in nearly all the Presbyterian churches, it was thought best that I should take up a central position and preach in one place. In Race Street there was a large German Church, the pastor of which was Mr. Helfenstein. The elders, together with their pastor, requested me to occupy the pulpit. Their house was then the largest house of worship in the city: it was always crowded, and it seated three thousand people when packed and the aisles were filled. I had an opportunity to preach to many Sabbath-school teachers; it was said that the Sabbath-school teachers throughout the city generally attended my ministry.

About midsummer, 1829, I left for a short time, and visited my wife's parents in Oneida county, and then returned, and laboured until about mid-winter. I think I laboured in Philadelphia about a year and a half. In all this time there was no abatement of the revival, that I could see. The converts became numerous; but I never had any knowledge of their exact number. I never laboured anywhere where I was received more cordially; and where Christians, and especially converts, appeared better than they did there. There was no jar or schism; and I never heard of any disastrous influence resulting from that revival.

A young woman, who was the daughter of a minister of the old school, attended my ministry, and became awfully convicted. Her convictions were so deep that she finally fell into despair. She told me she had been

taught from childhood that if she was one of the elect she would be converted ; and that until she was converted, and her nature changed by the Spirit of God, she could do nothing for herself, but to read her Bible and pray for a new heart.

When quite young she had been convicted of sin, but had followed her father's instruction, and thought that was all that was required of her. She waited for evidence that she was one of the elect. In the midst of her struggle of soul on the subject of her salvation, something had come up relative to the question of marriage : and she promised God that she would never give her hand to any man until she was a Christian. When she made the promise, she said that she expected God would very soon convert her ; but convictions passed away : she was not converted ; and that promise to God she dared not break.

When she was about eighteen years old, a young man proposed to make her his wife. She approved, but could not consent until she was a Christian. They loved each other, and he urged her to be married without delay ; but without telling him her reason, she kept deferring it for five years, waiting for God to convert her. Finally, in riding one day, the young man was thrown from the carriage, and instantly killed. This aroused the enmity of her heart against God ; she accused God of dealing hardly with her. She said that she had been waiting for Him to convert her, and had been faithful to her promise not to get married ; that she kept her lover waiting for her to get ready ; and now, behold ! God had cut him off, and she was still unconverted.

She had learned that the young man was a Universalist ;

and now she was much interested to believe that Universalism was true, and would not believe that God had sent him to hell : and if He had sent him to hell, she could not be reconciled. Thus she had been warring with God, before she came to our meetings, supposing that the blame of her not being converted was chargeable upon God, and not upon herself.

When she heard my preaching, and found her refuges of lies torn away, and saw that she should have given her heart to God long before, and all would have been well, she saw that she herself had been entirely to blame, and that the instructions of her father had been wrong ; and remembering how she had blamed God, and what a blasphemous attitude she had maintained before Him, she naturally despaired. I reasoned with her, and tried to show her the long-suffering of God, and encouraged her to hope, to believe, to lay hold upon eternal life ; but her sense of sin was so great that she seemed unable to grasp the promise, and sunk deeper into despair.

I became distressed about her case. At the close of every meeting she would follow me home with complaints, and would exhaust me by appeals to my sympathy and Christian compassion. After this had continued for weeks, one morning she called upon me in company with her aunt, who had become concerned, and who thought her on the verge of insanity. I was myself of the opinion that it would result in that if she would not believe. Catherine came into my room in her usual despairing way, but with a look of wildness that indicated a state unendurable ; and at the moment, I think it was the Spirit of God that sug-

gested to my mind to take a different course from what I had taken.

I said, "Catherine, you profess to believe that God is good." "Oh, yes! I believe that." "Well, you have often told me that His goodness forbids Him to have mercy on you—that your sins have been so great that it would be a dishonour to forgive and save you. You have often confessed that you believe God would forgive if He wisely could; but that your forgiveness would be an injury to Him, to His government, and to His universe, and therefore He cannot forgive you." "Yes, I believe that." I replied, "Then your difficulty is that you want God to sin, to act unwisely and injure Himself and the universe for the sake of saving you." She opened and set her large blue eyes upon me, and looked surprised and indignant. I proceeded: "Yes! you are in great trouble and anguish because God will not do wrong, because He will persist in being good, whatever may become of you. You go about in the greatest distress because God will not be persuaded to violate His own sense of duty, and save you to His own injury, and that of the entire universe. You think yourself of more consequence than God and all the universe; and cannot be happy unless God makes Himself and everybody else unhappy, in making you happy."

I pressed this upon her. She looked with astonishment at me, and after a few moments submitted. She seemed to be almost instantly subdued. She said, "I accept it. Let God send me to hell, if He thinks that best. I do not want Him to save me at the expense of the universe. Let Him do what seemeth

Him good." I got up instantly and left, and to get entirely away I got into a carriage and rode away. When I returned she had gone ; but in the afternoon she and her aunt returned, to declare what God had done for her soul. She was filled with joy and peace, and became one of the most submissive, humble, beautiful converts.

Another very beautiful girl called to see me under great conviction of sin. I asked, among other things, if she was convinced that she had been so wicked that God might in justice send her to hell. She replied in strongest language, "Yes ! I deserve a thousand hells." She was richly dressed. I had a very thorough conversation with her ; she broke down and gave herself to Christ. She was a very humble, broken-hearted convert. I learned that she went home and gathered up a great many of her artificial flowers and ornaments, of which she was very vain, and passed through the room with them in her hands. They asked what she was going to do. She said she was going to burn them up. Said she, "I will never wear them again." "Well," they said, "if you will not wear them, you can sell them ; don't burn them." But she said, "If I sell them, somebody else will be as vain of them as I have been ; I will burn them." She actually put them into the fire.

A few days after, she called on me, and said that she had, in passing through the market, observed a richly dressed lady. Her compassions were so stirred that she asked if she might speak to her. The lady replied that she might. She said, "My dear madam, are you not proud of your dress, and are you not vain, and neglecting salvation ?" She said that she herself burst

into tears as she said it, and told the lady a little of her own experience, how she had been attracted to dress, and how it had well-nigh ruined her soul. "Now," said she, "you are a beautiful lady, and are finely dressed; are you not in the same state of mind that I was in myself?" The lady wept, and confessed that that had been her snare; and she was afraid that love of dress and society would ruin her. She confessed that she had been neglecting salvation, because she did not know how to break away from the circle in which she moved. The young lady wanted to know if I thought she had done wrong in what she said to the lady. I told her that I wished all Christians were as faithful; and that I hoped she would never cease to warn her own sex against that which had so nearly ruined her own soul.

In the spring of 1829, when the Delaware was high, the lumbermen came down with their rafts from the region of the high land, where they had been getting the lumber out during winter. At that time there was a large tract of country along the northern region of Pennsylvania, called the lumber region, that extended toward the head waters of the river. Many were engaged in getting out lumber summer and winter. Much of this was floated down in the spring, when the water was high, to Philadelphia. They would get out their lumber when the river was low; and when the snow went off, and spring rains came on, they would float it down to where they could build rafts, or otherwise embark it for the Philadelphia market.

Many of the lumbermen were raising families, and there was a large tract unsettled and unoccupied, except

by these men. They had no schools, and no churches or religious privileges. I knew a minister who was born in that lumber region; and when he was twenty years old he had never attended a religious meeting, and did not know his alphabet.

These men attended our meetings, and quite a number of them were hopefully converted. They went back into the wilderness, and began to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and to tell the people around them what they had seen in Philadelphia, and to exhort them to attend to salvation. Their efforts were blessed the revival began to take hold, and to spread. It went on in a remarkable manner. It spread to such an extent that in many cases persons would be convicted and converted who had not attended any meetings, and who were almost as ignorant as heathen. Men who were getting out lumber, and were living in little shanties alone, or where two or three or more were together, would be seized with such conviction that it would lead them to wander off and inquire what they should do; and they would be converted. There was the greatest simplicity manifested by the converts.

An aged minister who had been acquainted with the state of things related the following fact. One man had a shanty by himself. He began to feel that he was a sinner, convictions increased until he broke down, confessed his sins, repented, and the Spirit of God revealed to him so much of the way of salvation that he evidently knew the Saviour. But he had never attended a prayer-meeting, or heard a prayer, that he recollected, in his life. His feelings became such that he finally felt constrained to go and tell his acquaintances how he felt,

but he found that they felt, a good many of them, just as he did; and that they were holding prayer-meetings. He heard them pray, and finally prayed himself; and this was the form of his prayer: "Lord, you have got me down, and I hope you will keep me down. And since you have had so good luck with me, I hope you will try other sinners."

This work began in the spring of 1829. In the spring of 1831 I was at Auburn again. Two or three men from this lumber region came to see me, and to inquire how they could get some ministers to go there. They said that not less than five thousand people had been converted in that region; that the revival had extended for eighty miles, and there was not a single minister of the Gospel there.

I have never been in that region, but from all I have ever heard, I have regarded that as one of the most remarkable revivals that have occurred. It was carried on almost independently of the ministry, among a class of people very ignorant; and yet so clear and wonderful were the teachings of God that I have always understood the revival was remarkably free from fanaticism, or wildness, or anything objectionable. I may have been misinformed in some respects, but report the matter as I have understood it. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" The spark that was struck into the hearts of those few lumbermen that came to Philadelphia spread over that forest, and resulted in the salvation of a multitude.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REVIVAL AT READING.

FROM Philadelphia, in the winter of 1829-30, I went to Reading, a city about forty miles west. In Reading there were several German and one Presbyterian Church. The pastor of the latter was the Rev. Dr. Greer. At his request, and that of the elders, I went out there for a time.

I soon found that neither Dr. Greer nor any of his people had any just idea of what they needed, or what a revival was. Revival efforts, for that winter, had been forestalled by an arrangement to have a ball every alternate week, which was attended by many of the members of the church, one of the leading elders being one of the managers. They had no preaching during the week, and I believe no religious meetings.

I thought it was my duty to tell Dr. Greer that those balls would very soon be given up, or I should not be allowed to occupy his pulpit; that balls attended by church members, and headed by one of his elders, would not consist with my preaching. He said, "Go on; take your own course." I preached three times on the Sabbath, and four times during the week, for three weeks, before I said anything about any other meetings.

On the third Sabbath I gave notice that a meeting for inquiry would be held in the lecture-room, on Monday evening, I stated the object, and mentioned the

class of persons that I desired to attend; inviting those only who were seriously impressed, and had made up their minds to receive instruction on the question of what they should do to be saved. Mr. Greer made no objection; but I do not think he had an idea that many would attend such a meeting; as to do so would be to make an acknowledgment that they were anxious for salvation.

Monday was a snowy day. I observed that conviction was taking hold of the congregation; yet I felt doubtful how many would attend a meeting of inquirers. When evening came, Dr. Greer came in, and behold! the lecture room, nearly as large as the body of the church above, was full; and on looking around, Dr. Greer observed that most of the impenitent persons in his congregation were present; and among them those who were regarded as the most respectable and influential.

He said nothing publicly. But he said to me, "I know nothing about such a meeting as this; take it into your own hands, and manage it in your own way." I opened by a short address, in which I explained what I wished; that is, to have conversation with each, and to have them state frankly what their convictions, determinations, and difficulties were.

I told them that if they were sick and called a physician, he would wish to know their symptoms. I said, "I cannot adapt instruction to your present state unless you reveal it. The thing, therefore, that I want is that you reveal your exact state at the present time. I will now pass round among you, and give each an opportunity to say, in the fewest words, what your state is."

Dr. Greer said not a word, but followed. He kept near me, for I spoke to each so as not to be heard by others. I found a great deal of conviction and feeling. Conviction had taken hold of all classes—the high, the low, the rich, and the poor.

Dr. Greer was moved. Though he said nothing, still it was evident that his interest was intense. To see his congregation in such a state was what he had never had any conception of. I saw that with difficulty he controlled his emotions.

When I had spent as much time as was allowed in conversation, I went back to the desk, and gave an address, in which I summed up the results of what was interesting in the communications made. Avoiding personalities, I took up representative cases, dissected, corrected, and taught them. I tried to strip away misapprehensions, to correct the impression that they must simply use means and wait for God to convert them; and I set before them the whole situation. After praying, I called on those that felt prepared to submit, and who were willing then and there to pledge themselves to live to God, to kneel down, and while I prayed to commit themselves to Christ, and inwardly to do what I exhorted them. I called on those only to kneel who were willing to do what God required, and what I presented before them.

As soon as I saw that they thoroughly understood, I called on them to kneel, and knelt myself. Dr. Greer knelt by my side. I presented the case in prayer, and held to the point of now submitting, believing, and consecrating themselves to God. There was an awful solemnity pervading the congregation, and the stillness.

of death, with the exception of my own voice, the sobs, sighs, and weeping.

After spreading the case before God, I pronounced the blessing and dismissed them. Dr. Greer took me cordially by the hand, and smiling said, "I will see you in the morning." At about eleven o'clock a messenger came to my lodgings, and said that Dr. Greer was dead. I inquired what it meant. He said he had retired, was taken with a fit of apoplexy, and died.

Although I found a goodly number had, to all human appearance, submitted at the meeting, still the death of Dr. Greer, under such extraordinary circumstances, proved a great diversion for a week or more; but after his funeral was over, and the usual evening services got into their proper channel, the work took on a powerful type, and went forward in a most encouraging manner.

Many very interesting incidents occurred. On one very snowy night, when the snow was drifting under a fierce gale, I was called up about midnight to visit a man who was under such awful conviction that he could not live, unless something could be done. He was a stalwart man, very muscular, of great force of will and strength of nerve, physically a fine specimen of humanity. His wife was a professor of religion; but he had "cared for none of these things."

He had been at the meeting, and the sermon had torn him to pieces. He went home in a terrible state, his convictions and distress increasing till it overcame bodily strength; and his family feared he would die. I heard his moanings, or rather howlings, before I got near. I found him sitting on the floor, his wife supporting his head—and a look in his face which was indescribable.

Accustomed as I was to seeing persons under convictions, his appearance gave me a shock. He was writhing in agony, grinding his teeth, and literally gnawing his tongue for pain. He cried out, "Oh, Mr. Finney! I am lost! I am a lost soul!" I was greatly shocked, and exclaimed, "If this is conviction, what is hell?" However, I recovered myself, and sat down. At first he found it difficult to attend; but I soon led his thoughts to the way of salvation through Christ. His burden was soon removed. He was persuaded to trust, and he came out free and joyful in hope.

From day to day I had my hands, my head, and my heart entirely full. There was no pastor to help me, and the work spread. The elder of the church, to whom I have alluded as being one of the managers of their balls, broke down before the Lord, and entered into the work; and his family were soon converted.

Very early one morning a lawyer, belonging to one of the most respectable families of the town, called, in the greatest agitation. I saw he was a man of first-rate intelligence, and a gentleman; but I had nowhere seen him to know him. He introduced himself, and said he was a lost sinner—that he had made up his mind that there was no hope for him. He then informed me that when he was in Princeton College he and two of his classmates became very anxious about their souls. They went together to Dr. Ashbel Green, who was then president, and asked what they should do to be saved. The doctor told them he was very glad to have them come and make the inquiry; and then told them to keep out of all bad company, to read their Bible statedly, and to pray God to give them a new heart. "Continue this,"

he said, "and press forward in duty, and the Spirit of God will convert you; or else He will leave you, and you will return back to your sins." "Well," I inquired, "how did it terminate?" "Oh," said he, "we did just as he told us to do. We kept out of bad company, and prayed that God would make us a new heart; but after a little while convictions wore away, and we did not care to pray any longer. We lost interest in the subject!" and then, bursting into tears, he said, "My two companions are in drunkards' graves, and if I cannot repent I shall soon be in one myself."

I tried to instruct him, and to show the error that he had fallen into, and that he had resisted and grieved the Spirit. I tried to show that God required him to repent, but God could not repent for him; required him to believe, but God could not believe for him; God required him to submit, but could not submit for him. I then tried to make him understand the agency that the Spirit of God has in giving the sinner repentance and a new heart; that it is a Divine persuasion; that the Spirit leads him to see his sins, urges him to give them up, and to flee from the wrath to come. He presents to him the Saviour, the atonement, the plan of salvation, and urges him to accept it.

I asked if he did not feel this urgency upon himself, in these truths revealed in his mind; and a call now to submit, to believe, to make himself a new heart. "Oh, yes!" he said, "I see and feel all this; but am I not given up of God? Is not my day of grace past?" I said "No! It is plain the Spirit of God is still calling, still urging you to repentance; you acknowledge that you feel this in your mind." He inquired, "Is this, then,

what the Spirit of God is doing, to show me all this ? ” I assured him that it was ; and that he was to understand this as a Divine call, and as evidence conclusive that he was not abandoned, and had not sinned away the day of grace, but that God was striving to save him still. I then asked if he would respond to the call.

When I saw that the way was fully prepared, I called on him to kneel and submit; and he did so, and, to all human appearance, became a thorough convert. “ Oh ! ” he afterwards said, “ if Dr. Green had only told us this that you have told me, we should all have been converted immediately. But my friends and companions are lost; and what a wonder of mercy it is that I am saved ! ”

There was a merchant in Reading, one branch of whose business was the making of whisky; he had just been fitting up a very large distillery. He had constructed it with all the latest improvements, on a large scale; but as soon as he was converted he gave up all thought of going any further with that business. He said, “ I shall have nothing to do with that; I shall tear my distillery down; I will neither work it nor sell it.”

His wife was a good woman, and a sister to Mr. B——, whose conversion I have mentioned as occurring on that stormy night. The merchant’s name was O’B——. The revival took a powerful hold in his family, and several were converted. I do not recollect now how many there were; but I think that every impenitent person in his household was converted. His brother also, and his brother’s wife, and quite a large circle of relatives were among the converts. Mr.

O'B—— himself was in feeble health, and was rapidly passing away. I visited him frequently, and found him full of joy.

We had been examining candidates for admission to the church, and a large number were to be admitted. Among them were those members of his family and those relatives that had been converted. Sabbath morning came. It was soon found Mr. O'B—— could not live through the day. He called his wife and said, “My dear, I am going to spend the Sabbath in heaven; let all the family go, and all the friends, and unite with the church below; and I will join the church above.” Before meeting time he was dead. Friends were called in to lay him in his shroud; his family and relatives gathered around, and then turned away and came to meeting; and, as he had desired, united with the Church Militant, while he went to unite with the Church Triumphant.

Their pastor had but just gone before; and I had said to Mr. O'B——, “Give my love to Brother Greer when you get to heaven.” He smiled and said, “Do you think I shall know him?” I said, “Yes, undoubtedly you will. Give him my love, and tell him the work is going on gloriously.” “I will, I will,” said he. His wife and family sat at the Communion table, showing in their countenances mingled joy and sorrow.

There was much that was moving and interesting in that revival. It was among a population that had had no conception of revivals. The German population supposed themselves to have been made Christians by baptism, and by receiving the Communion. Nearly

every one, if asked when they became Christians, would reply that they took their Communion of Dr. M——, or some other divine. When I asked if they thought that was religion, they would say, Yes, they supposed it was.

The revival had to encounter that view of things; and the influence was, at first, almost altogether in that direction. It was held that for them to think of being religious by being converted, and to establish family prayer, or to give themselves to prayer, was not only fanaticism, but was virtually saying that their ancestors had all gone to hell; for they had done no such thing. The German ministers would preach against those things, and speak severely of those that forsook the ways of their fathers, and thought it necessary to be converted, and to maintain family and secret prayer.

The great majority of Dr. Greer's congregation were converted in this revival. At first I had considerable difficulty of getting rid of the influence of the press. The people were a good deal under the influence of the daily press; I mean the German population particularly. Editors began to give people religious advice and to speak against the revival. This threw the people into a state of perplexity. It went on from day to day, and from week to week, till finally the state of things became such that I thought it my duty to notice it. I took for my text: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." I went on to show in what way sinners would fulfil the desires of the devil, pointing out many ways in which they would perform his dirty work, and do for him what he could not do for himself.

After I had got the subject before the people, I applied it to the course pursued by the editors. I asked people if they did not think that those editors were fulfilling the desires of the devil; if they did not believe the devil desired them to do just what they did? I asked if it was suitable and decent for men of their character to attempt to give religious instruction to people? I said: "If I had a family in the place, I would not have such a paper in the house; I should fear to have it under my roof; I should consider it too filthy to be touched, and would take the tongs and throw it into the street." In some way the papers got into the street the next morning, pretty plentifully, and I neither saw nor heard any more of their opposition.

I continued in Reading until late in the spring. There were many very striking conversions; and Dr. Greer's congregation was left united, encouraged, and strengthened, with large additions made to their number.

From Reading I went to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at that time, and until his death, the home of the late President Buchanan. The Presbyterian Church at Lancaster had no pastor, and I found religion in a low state. They had never had a revival, and manifestly had no just conception of what it was, or of the means of securing it. I remained at Lancaster a short time. However, the work of God was revived, the Spirit of God being poured out almost at once upon the people. I was the guest of an aged gentleman, one of the elders, and the leading man in the church.

A fact occurred in relation to him that revealed the real state of things in that church. A former pastor

had invited Mr. K—— to join and hold the office of elder. One Sabbath evening, after hearing a couple of very searching sermons, the old gentleman could not sleep. He was so greatly exercised that he could not endure it until morning. He called me up in the middle of the night, stated what his convictions were, and then said that he knew he had never been converted. He said that when he was requested to join the church and become an elder, he knew that he was not converted; but the subject was pressed upon him till he finally consulted an aged minister not far from Lancaster. He stated that he had never been converted, and yet that he was desired to join the church that he might become an elder. Dr. C——, in view of all the circumstances, advised him to join and accept the office, which he did.

His convictions at the time were very deep. I gave him such instructions as I thought he needed, pressed him to accept the Saviour; and dealt with him just as I would with any other inquiring sinner. He professed at the time to submit and accept the Saviour.

One evening I preached on a subject that led me to insist upon the immediate acceptance of Christ. The house was crowded. I made a strong appeal. I called on those whose minds were made up, and who would then accept the Saviour, to rise, that we might make them subjects of prayer. There were two men sitting near, one of whom was much affected under the appeal, and could not avoid manifesting very strong emotion, which was observed by his neighbour. However, the man did not rise, nor give his heart to God. I had pressed the thought upon them that that might be the last opportunity that some of them would ever have to

meet and decide ; that in so large a congregation it was not unlikely that there were those there who would then decide their everlasting destiny, one way or the other. It was not unlikely that God would hold some of them to the decision that they then made.

After the meeting these two men went out together, and one said, "I saw you feel very deeply under the appeals Mr. Finney made." "I did, I never felt so before in my life; and especially when he reminded us that that might be the last time we should ever have an opportunity to accept the offer of mercy." They went on conversing in this way for some distance, and then separated, each going to his own home. It was a dark night, and the one who had felt so deeply, and was so pressed with the conviction that he might then be rejecting his last offer, fell over the curbstone, and broke his neck.

I established prayer-meetings in Lancaster, and insisted upon the elders taking part. This they did, although they had never been accustomed to do it. The interest seemed to increase, and hopeful conversions multiplied.

CHAPTER XIX.

REVIVALS IN COLUMBIA AND NEW YORK CITY.

FROM Lancaster, about midsummer, 1830, I returned to Oneida county, New York, and spent a time at my father-in-law's. During my stay in Whitestown, a messenger came from Columbia, in Herkimer county, requesting me to go and assist in a work of grace which was already commenced. I went to see, and to lend such aid as I was able.

At Columbia was a large German church, the membership of which had been received upon examination of their doctrinal knowledge, instead of their Christian experience. Their pastor was a young man of the name of H——, of German descent, and from Pennsylvania.

He said he studied theology with a German doctor of divinity, at the place where he lived, who did not encourage experimental religion; and that one of his fellow-students was religiously inclined, and used to pray. Their teacher suspected this, and in some way came to a knowledge of the fact. He warned the young man against it, as a very dangerous practice, and said he would become insane if he persisted. Mr. H—— said that he himself had no religion. He had joined the church in the common way, and had no thought that anything else was requisite to become a minister. But his mother was a pious woman; she knew better, and

was greatly distressed that a son should enter the ministry who had never been converted. When he received a call to the church in Columbia, and was about to leave home, his mother had serious talk with him, impressed upon him his responsibility, and said things that bore powerfully upon his conscience. He said that this conversation of his mother he could not get rid of; that it bore upon his mind heavily, and his convictions of sin deepened until he was nearly in despair.

This continued for many months. He had no one to consult, and did not open his mind to anybody; but after a severe and protracted struggle he was converted, came into the light, saw where he was, where he had been, saw the condition of his church, and of all those churches which had admitted their members in the way in which he had been admitted. His wife was unconverted. He immediately gave himself to labour for her conversion, and, under God, he soon secured it. His soul was full of the subject; he read his Bible, prayed, and preached with all his might. He was a young convert, and had had no instruction such as he needed, and he felt at a loss what to do. He rode about and conversed with the elders and principal members, and satisfied himself that one or two knew what it was to be converted.

After much prayer and consideration, he made up his mind what to do. On the Sabbath he gave them notice that there would be a meeting of the church, during the week, for the transaction of business, and wished all the church to be present. His own conversion, preaching, visiting, and conversing, had already created a good deal of excitement, so that religion came to be the common

topic of conversation; and his call for a church-meeting was responded to on the day appointed.

He addressed them in regard to the real state of the church, and the error they had fallen into in regard to the conditions on which members had been received. He proposed to disband the church and form a new one, insisting that this was essential to the prosperity of religion. He had an understanding with those members that were converted that they should lead in voting for the disbanding. The motion was put; whereupon the converted members arose as requested. They were very influential, and the people looking around and seeing those on their feet, rose; and finally kept rising till the vote was nearly or quite unanimous. The pastor then said, "There is now no church in Columbia, and we propose to form one of people who have been converted."

He then related his own experience, and his wife did the same. Then the converted members and elders followed. He then said, "Your church relations are dissolved. You are out in the world; and until you are converted, and in the church, you cannot have your children baptized, and you cannot partake of the ordinances." This created a panic; for, according to their views, it was an awful thing not to partake of the Sacrament, and not to have children baptized; for this was the way in which they themselves had been made Christians.

Mr. H—— then laboured with all his might; he visited, preached, prayed, held meetings, and the interest increased. Thus the work had been going on for some time, when he sent the messenger for me. A warm-

hearted young convert, he listened to my preaching with almost irrepressible joy. I found the congregation large and interested; and the work was in a very prosperous state. That revival continued until it reached nearly all the inhabitants. Galesburg, in Illinois, was settled by a colony from Columbia, who were nearly all converts of the revival. The founder of the colony and of Knox College, located there, was Mr. Gale, my former pastor at Adams.

Mr. H—— I found evangelical, and his heart warm; he was surrounded by a congregation thoroughly interested in religion. They would hang on my lips with an interest, attention, and patience, in the highest degree interesting and affecting. Mr. H—— was like a little child—teachable, humble, and earnest. That work continued for over a year, spreading throughout that large and interesting population of farmers.

After I returned to Whitestown, I was invited to visit New York. Anson G. Phelps, since well known as a great contributor, by will, to benevolent institutions, hearing that I had not been invited to that city, hired a vacant church in Vandewater Street, and sent me a request to preach. I did so, and we had a powerful revival. I found Mr. Phelps very much engaged in the work, and not hesitating at any expense that was necessary to promote it. The church hired could be had only for three months. Accordingly Mr. Phelps purchased a church in Prince Street, near Broadway, built by the Universalists, and sold to Mr. Phelps, who paid for it himself. We there formed a church, mostly of persons that had been converted in Vandewater Street. I continued my labours until quite the latter part of the summer.

I was very much struck with the piety of Mr. Phelps. While we continued at Vandewater Street, myself and wife, with our only child, were guests in his family. I had observed that, while Mr. Phelps was a man literally loaded with business, somehow he preserved a highly spiritual frame; and that he would come directly from business to our prayer-meetings, and enter into them with such spirit as to show clearly that his mind was not absorbed to the exclusion of spiritual things. As I watched him from day to day, I became more and more interested in his life. One night I had occasion to go down stairs about twelve or one o'clock. I supposed the family were all asleep, but I found Mr. Phelps sitting by his fire, in his night dress, and saw that I had broken in upon his secret devotions. I apologized by saying that I supposed he was in bed. He replied, "Brother Finney, I have a great deal of business pressing me during the day, and have but little time for secret devotion; and my custom is, after having a nap at night, to arise and have a season of communion with God." After his death it was found that he had kept a journal during these hours in the night, comprising several manuscript volumes. This revealed the secret workings of his mind, and the real progress of his interior life.

There was one case of conversion. A young woman visited me under great conviction of sin. I found that she had many things upon her conscience. She had been in the habit of pilfering from her very childhood. She was the daughter, and the only child, of a widow; and she had been in the habit of taking, from her school-mates and others, handkerchiefs, breastpins, pencils, and

whatever she had an opportunity to steal. She made confession to me, and asked what she should do. I told her she must return them, and make confession to those from whom she had taken them.

This greatly tried her: yet her convictions were so deep that she began the work of making confession and restitution; but as she went forward with it, she continued to recall more and more instances, and kept visiting me frequently, and confessing thefts of almost every kind of articles that a young woman could use. I asked her if her mother knew that she had these things. She said, yes; but that she had always told her mother that they were given. She said to me, "Mr. Finney, I suppose I have stolen a million of times. I find I have many things that I know I stole, but I cannot recollect from whom." I refused altogether to compromise with her, and insisted on her making restitution in every case which she could, by any means, recall. From time to time she would come and report. I asked what the people said when she returned the articles. She replied, "Some of them say that I am crazy; some of them say that I am a fool; and some of them are very much affected." "Do they all forgive you?" I asked. "Oh, yes!" said she, "they all forgive me; but some of them think that I had better not do as I am doing."

She informed me that she had a shawl, stolen from a daughter of Bishop Hobart, of New York. I told her she must restore it. A few days after she called and related the result; she folded up the shawl, went with it, and rung the bell at the Bishop's door; and handed the bundle, directed to the Bishop. She made no ex-

planation, but turned immediately away, and ran round the corner into another street, lest someone should see which way she went, and find out who she was; but conscience smote her, and she said, "I have not done right. Somebody else may be suspected of having stolen the shawl, unless I make known who did it."

She went back and inquired if she could see the Bishop. Being informed that she could, she was conducted to his study. She then confessed about the shawl, and all that had passed. "Well," said I, "and how did the Bishop receive you?" "Oh," said she, "when I told him, he wept, laid his hand on my head, and said he forgave me, and prayed God to forgive me." "And have you been at peace in your mind about that transaction since?" "Oh, yes!" said she. This process continued for weeks. This girl was going from place to place, restoring things stolen, and making confession. Sometimes her convictions would be so awful that it seemed as if she would be deranged.

One morning she sent for me to come to her mother's residence; and I found her with her hair hanging over her shoulders, and her clothes in disorder, walking the room in despair, and with a look that was frightful, because it indicated that she was well-nigh deranged. Said I, "My dear child, what is the matter?" She held in her hand, as she was walking, a little Testament. She turned to me and said, "Mr. Finney, I stole this Testament. I have stolen God's Word; and will God ever forgive me? I cannot recollect which of the girls it was that I stole it from. I stole it from one of my schoolmates, and it was so long ago that I had really forgotten that I had stolen it. It occurred to me this

morning; and it seems to me that God can never forgive me for stealing His Word." I assured her that there was no reason for despair. "But," said she, "what shall I do? I cannot remember where I got it." I told her, "Keep it as a constant remembrance of your former sins, and use it for the good you may now get from it."

"Oh," said she, "if I could only remember where I got it, I would instantly restore it." "Well," said I, "if you can ever recollect where you got it, make an instant restitution, either by restoring that or giving another as good." "I will," said she.

All this was affecting; but the state of mind that resulted was truly wonderful. A depth of humility, a deep knowledge of herself and her depravity, a brokenness of heart, and contrition of spirit, and finally a faith, joy, love, and peace, like a river, succeeded; she became one of the most delightful young Christians that I have known.

When I expected to leave New York, I thought that someone ought to watch over her. Up to this time, whatever had passed between us had been sacredly kept to myself; but as I was about to leave, I narrated the fact to Mr. Phelps, and the narration affected him greatly. He said, "Brother Finney, introduce me too. I will be her friend; I will watch over her for good." He did so, as I afterwards learned. I have not seen the young woman since I related the fact to Mr. Phelps. But when I returned from England the last time, in visiting one of Mr. Phelps's daughters, in the course of the conversation this case was alluded to. I inquired, "Did your father introduce you to that young woman?" "Oh,

yes!" she replied, "we all knew her;" meaning, as I supposed, all the daughters of the family. "Well, what do you know of her?" "Oh, she is a very earnest Christian woman. She is married, and her husband is in business in this city. She is a member of the church." I inquired, "Has she always maintained a consistent Christian character?" "Oh, yes!" was the reply; "she is an excellent, praying woman." In some way I have been informed that the woman said that she never had had a temptation to pilfer from the time of conversion; that she had never known what it was to have the desire.

This revival prepared the way in New York for the organization of the Free Presbyterian Churches, composed afterward, largely, of the converts. Many had belonged to the church in Prince Street.

At this point, in order to render intelligible many things that I shall have to say, I must give a little account of circumstances connected with the conversion of Mr. Lewis Tappan, and his connection afterward with my own labours. This I received from himself. He was a Unitarian, and lived in Boston. His brother Arthur, then a very extensive dry-goods merchant in New York, was orthodox, and an earnest Christian. The revivals through Central New York had created excitement among Unitarians; and their newspapers had a good deal to say against them. Especially were there stange stories, representing me as a half-crazed fanatic. These had been related to Lewis Tappan by Mr. W——, a leading Unitarian minister of Boston; and he believed them. They were credited by many in New England, and throughout the State of New York.

While these stories were in circulation, Lewis Tappan visited his brother Arthur in New York, and they fell into conversation in regard to those revivals. Lewis called Arthur's attention to the strange fanaticism connected with what was said of myself. He asserted that I gave out that I was "the brigadier-general of Jesus Christ." This and like reports were in circulation, and Lewis insisted upon their truth. Arthur told Lewis that they were false. Lewis, relying upon the statements of Mr. W——, proposed to bet five hundred dollars that he could prove these reports to be true. Arthur replied, "Lewis, you know that I do not bet; but I will tell you what I will do. If you can prove by credible testimony that that is true, and that the reports about Mr. Finney are true, I will give you five hundred dollars. I make this offer to lead you to investigate. I want you to know that these stories are false, and that the source whence they come is utterly unreliable." Lewis, not doubting that he could bring proof, wrote to Rev. Mr. P——, at Trenton Falls, New York, to whom Mr. W—— had referred him, and authorized him to expend five hundred dollars, if need be, in procuring sufficient testimony that the story was true—such testimony as would lead to the conviction of a person in a court of justice. Mr. P—— undertook to procure the testimony; but, after great painstaking, was unable to furnish any, except what was contained in a Universalist newspaper, printed in Buffalo, in which it had been asserted that Mr. Finney claimed that he was a brigadier-general of Jesus Christ. Many persons heard, and believed, that I had said these things somewhere; but he could not learn that these things had been said anywhere.

This, in connection with other matters, led him to reflect seriously upon the nature of the opposition; and knowing what stress had been laid upon these stories by Unitarians, and the use they had made of them, his confidence was greatly shaken. His prejudices against revivals became softened; he was led to review the theological writings of the Orthodox and the Unitarians with seriousness; and the result was that he embraced orthodox views. The mother of the Tappans was a very godly, praying woman; she had never had any sympathy with Unitarianism.

Lewis Tappan became as firm and zealous in support of orthodox views and revivals as he had been in opposition. About the time that I left New York, after my first labours there in Vandewater and Prince Streets, Mr. Tappan and some other good brethren became dissatisfied with the state of things in New York, and, after much prayer and consideration, concluded to organize a new congregation, and introduce new measures for the conversion of men. They obtained a place, and called the Rev. Joel Parker, then pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, to come to their aid. Mr. Parker began his labours about the time that I closed mine in Prince Street. The First Free Presbyterian Church was formed, and Mr. Parker became its pastor. They laboured especially among that class that had not been in the habit of attending meeting anywhere, and were very successful. They finally fitted up the upper story of some warehouses in Dey Street, that would hold a good congregation, and there they continued.

CHAPTER XX.

REVIVAL IN ROCHESTER, 1830.

LEAVING New York, I spent a few weeks in Whitestown; and, being pressed to go in many directions, I was at a loss what was my duty; but among others, an invitation was received from the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, of which Mr. Parker had been pastor, to supply for a season.

I found that on several accounts it was a very unpromising field. There were but three Presbyterian Churches in Rochester. The Third Church, that extended the invitation, had no minister, and religion was in a low state. The Second, or "Brick Church," had a pastor; but in regard to his preaching there was considerable division, and he was restive and about to leave. There was a controversy existing between an elder of the Third and the pastor of the First Church, that was about to be tried before presbytery. This and other matters had aroused unchristian feeling in both churches; and it seemed a forbidding field. The friends at Rochester were extremely anxious to have me go. Being left without a pastor, they felt as if there was great danger that they would be scattered, unless something could be done to revive religion.

With these pressing invitations I felt greatly perplexed. I remained at my father-in-law's, and considered the subject, until I felt that I must take hold and work some-

where. Accordingly we went to Utica, about seven miles distant, where I had many praying friends. We arrived in the afternoon, and in the evening a number of the leading brethren, in whose prayers and wisdom I had confidence, met for consultation and prayer in regard to my next field of labour. I laid the facts before them in regard to Rochester; and the leading facts in respect to the other fields to which I was invited. Rochester seemed to be the least inviting of all.

After several seasons of prayer, interspersed with conversation, the brethren gave their opinions in relation to what they thought it wise to do. They were unanimous that Rochester was too uninviting to be put in competition with New York or Philadelphia, and some other fields to which I was then invited; and I retired from this meeting, as I supposed, to go to New York or Philadelphia. This was before railroads existed; and I expected to take the canal boat and start in the morning.

After I retired, the question was presented to my mind under a different aspect; something seemed to question: "What are the reasons that deter you from going to Rochester?" I could enumerate them; but the question returned: "Are these good reasons?" I came to the conclusion that the reasons against my going to Rochester were the most cogent for my going. I felt ashamed to shrink from undertaking the work because of difficulties; and it was strongly impressed upon me that that was my field. My mind became decided, before I retired to rest, that Rochester was the place to which the Lord would have me go. I informed my wife of my decision; and in the morning, before the people were gen-

erally moving, we embarked and went westward instead of eastward.

We arrived early, and were invited to lodge with Mr. Josiah Bissell, the leading elder in the Third Church, and the person that had complained to the presbytery respecting Dr. Penny. I met my cousin, Mr. S——, in the street, who invited me to his house. He was an elder in the First Church, and, hearing that I was expected, was anxious to have his pastor, Dr. Penny, meet and converse with me, and be prepared to co-operate with me. I declined his kind invitation, informing him that I was to be the guest of Mr. Bissell. But he called again and informed me that he had arranged an interview between myself and Dr. Penny; I hastened to meet the Doctor, and when I commenced Dr. Penny attended our meetings, and soon invited me to his pulpit. Mr. S—— exerted himself to bring about a good understanding between pastors and churches, and a change soon manifested itself.

There were soon some marked conversions. The wife of a prominent lawyer was one of the first. She was a lady of high standing, culture, and extensive influence. A friend of hers who introduced her was a Christian, who had found that she was exercised in her mind, and persuaded her to see me.

Mrs. M—— had been worldly, and fond of society. She told me that when I first came she feared there would be a revival; and a revival would interfere with the pleasures she had promised herself that winter. I found that the Spirit of the Lord was indeed dealing with her in an unsparing manner. She was bowed down with conviction. After conversation I pressed her to

renounce the world, self, and everything for Christ. I saw that she was proud, and this struck me as the most marked feature of her character. We knelt down to pray; and my mind being full of the subject of the pride of her heart, I introduced the text: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." I turned this subject over in prayer; and I heard Mrs. M——, by my side, repeating: "Except ye be converted and become as little children—as little children—except ye be converted and become as little children." I observed that her mind was taken with that, and the Spirit of God was pressing it upon her heart. I therefore continued to pray, holding her up before God as needing that very thing.

I felt that the Lord was answering; that He was doing the work. Her heart broke down, sensibility gushed forth, and before we rose she was indeed a little child. When I looked, her face was turned toward heaven, and tears streaming down; and she was praying that she might be made a little child. She rose, became peaceful, settled in joyous faith, and retired. From that moment she was out-spoken, and zealous for the conversion of friends. Her conversion produced much excitement.

I had never, except in rare instances, used as a means of promoting revivals what has been called "the anxious seat." I had sometimes asked persons to stand up; but this I had not frequently done. I had often felt the necessity of some measure that would bring sinners to a stand. I had found that, with the higher classes especially, the greatest obstacle was fear of being known as anxious inquirers.

I found also that something was needed to make the impression that they were expected at once to give their hearts; something that would call them to act as publicly as they had in their sins; something that would commit them to the service of Christ. When I had called them simply to stand in the congregation, that had a good effect; and it answered the purpose for which it was intended, but, after all, something more was necessary to bring them from among the ungodly to a renunciation of sinful ways and a public committal of themselves to God.

At Rochester I first introduced this measure, years after the cry had been raised of "new measures." After the conversion of Mrs. M——, I made a call upon all that class of persons who were willing to renounce their sins to come forward to certain seats which I requested to be vacated, and offer themselves to God while we made them subjects of prayer. A much larger number came forward than I expected; and among them another prominent lady, and several of her acquaintance, belonging to the same circle of society. This increased the interest among that class of people; and it was soon seen that the Lord was aiming at the conversion of the highest classes. My meetings soon became thronged; lawyers, physicians, merchants, and indeed all the most intelligent people, became interested and more easily influenced.

Soon the work took effect, extensively, among the lawyers. There has always been a large number of leading lawyers resident at Rochester. They became anxious, and came freely to our meetings of inquiry; numbers came forward to the anxious seat and publicly

gave their hearts to God. One evening after preaching three of them followed me to my room, all of them deeply convicted, but not clear in their minds. I conversed and prayed with them; and before they left they all found peace in believing.

Soon after the work commenced, the difficulties between Mr. Bissell and Dr. Penny were healed; and all distractions and collisions were adjusted; so that a spirit of kindness and fellowship pervaded the churches.

On one occasion I had an appointment in the First Church. There had been a military parade. The militia had been called out; and I feared that the excitement might divert attention and mar the work of the Lord. The house was filled. Dr. Penny introduced the services, and was engaged in prayer, when I heard something which I supposed to be the report of a gun, and the jingling of glass, as if a window had broken. My thought was that some careless person had fired so near the window as to break a pane; but before I had time to think again, Dr. Penny leaped from the pulpit almost over me, for I was kneeling by the sofa behind him. The pulpit was in the front of the church, between the two doors. The rear wall of the church stood upon the brink of the canal. The congregation in a moment fell into a panic, and rushed for the doors and windows. One elderly woman held up a window in the rear, where several leaped out into the canal. The rush was terrific. Some jumped over galleries into the aisles. They ran over each other.

I stood in the pulpit, and, not knowing what had happened, put up my hands, and cried at the top of my

voice, "Be quiet! Be quiet!" Directly a couple of women, rushing into the pulpit, caught hold of me in a state of distraction. Dr. Penny ran into the street; and they were getting out in every direction, as fast as possible. As I did not know that there was any danger, the scene looked so ludicrous that I could scarcely refrain from laughing. They rushed over each other in the aisles, so that in several instances men that had been crushed down rose up and threw off others who had rushed upon them. All at length got out; several were considerably hurt, but no one killed; but the house was strewn with all sorts of women's apparel. The men had very generally gone out without their hats; and many had been seriously bruised.

The walls of the church had been settling for some time, the ground being damp from its proximity to the canal. It had been spoken of as not in a satisfactory state; and some were afraid that the tower, the roof, or the walls would come down. Of this I had heard nothing. The original alarm was created by a timber falling end downwards, and breaking through the ceiling, above the lamp in front of the organ.

On examining the house, it was found that the walls had spread in such a manner that there was indeed danger of the roof falling in. At the time, I feared that public attention would be diverted, and the work hindered; but the Spirit of the Lord had taken hold of the work, and nothing seemed to stay it.

From that time our meetings alternated between the Second and Third Churches, the people of the First Church and congregation attending as far as they could get into the house. The three churches, and indeed

Christians of every denomination, seemed to make common cause to pull sinners out of the fire. We were obliged to hold meetings continually; I preached nearly every night, and three times on the Sabbath. We held our meetings of inquiry very frequently in the morning.

We had been holding a meeting of inquiry, and a gentleman was converted there, who was son-in-law of a very godly woman belonging to the Third Church. When he returned from the meeting of inquiry, he was full of joy, peace, and hope. She had been spending the time in earnest prayer that God would convert him at that meeting. As soon as she met him, and he declared his conversion, and from his countenance she saw that it was so, it overcame her; she swooned away, and fell dead.

There was at that time a high school at Rochester, presided over by Mr. B——, the son of A—— B——, then pastor of the church at Brighton. Mr. B—— was a sceptic, but was at the head of a very large and flourishing school. As the school was made up of both sexes, Miss A—— was assistant and associate. The students attended the religious services, and many became deeply anxious. One morning Mr. B—— found that his classes could not recite; they were so anxious that they wept, and it very much confounded him. He called Miss A——, and told her that the young people were so exercised about their souls that they could not recite; and asked if they had not better send for Mr. Finney to give them instruction. She was very glad to have him make the inquiry, and cordially advised him to send for me. He did so, and the revival took hold of that school. Mr. B—— himself was hopefully converted. Miss A——

informed me that more than forty persons converted in that school had become ministers. She named many of them to me. A large number had become foreign missionaries.

After remaining a few weeks at Josiah Bissell's, we took lodgings in a more central position, at the house of Mr. B——, a lawyer and a Christian. His wife's sister was with them, and was impenitent. She was young, of fine appearance, an exquisite singer, cultivated, and was engaged in marriage to a man who was Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. He was very proud, and resisted the anxious seat, and spoke against it. A large number of lawyers were converted; and the young lady was converted. I mention this because the Judge afterwards married her; which no doubt led to his own conversion in a revival ten years later.

A number of very striking incidents occurred. One day, the lady who first visited me called in company with a friend with whom she wished me to converse. I did so, but found her to all appearance hardened, and rather disposed to trifle. Her husband was a merchant, and they were persons of high standing. When I pressed her to attend, she said she would not because her husband would not attend, and she was not going to leave him. I asked her if she was willing to be lost because her husband would not attend; and if it was not folly to neglect her soul because he did his. She replied, "If he goes to hell, I want to go where he does. I do not want to be separated from him, at any rate." It seemed that I could make little, if any, impression; but from night to night I had been making appeals to the congregation, and calling forward those that were prepared to give

their hearts to God; and numbers were converted every evening.

When this woman went home, her husband said, "My dear, I mean to go forward to-night, and give my heart to God." "What!" said she; I have to-day told Mr. Finney that I would not become a Christian; and that if you went to hell, I should go with you." "Well," said he, "I do not mean to go to hell. I have made up my mind to give my heart to Christ." "Well," said she, "then I will not go to meeting, I do not want to see it. And if you have a mind, after all, to become a Christian you may; I won't." When the time came, he went to meeting alone. At the close, I called for those that were anxious to come forward, and take certain seats and occupy a certain space about the pulpit, where we could commend them to God. It afterward appeared that the wife herself had come, had passed up the other aisle, and taken a seat almost opposite, in the extreme part of the house. When I made the call, he started immediately. She was watching, and as soon as she saw him on his feet, and making his way along, she also started down the other aisle, and they met in front of the pulpit, and knelt down together as subjects of prayer.

A large number obtained hope on the spot; but this husband and wife did not. They went home, too proud to say much to each other about what they had done, and spent a very restless night. The next day, about ten o'clock, he called. While I was conversing with him, the servant informed me that a lady was waiting in Mrs. Finney's room to see me. I requested him to wait while I went in to see her. I found that it was the wife of the

man who was then in my room. Neither of them knew that the other had called. I conversed with her, and found that she was on the very verge of submitting to Christ. I had learned that he was also, to all appearance, in the same state. I then returned to him and said, "I am going to pray with a lady in Mrs. Finney's room, and we will go in there, if you please, and all join in prayer together. He followed, and found his own wife. They looked at each other greatly affected. We knelt down. I had not proceeded far before she began to weep and to pray audibly for her husband. I stopped and listened, and found that she had lost all concern for herself, and was struggling in an agony for his conversion. His heart seemed to give way, and just at this time the bell rang for dinner. I thought it would be well to leave them alone. I therefore touched my wife, and we rose silently and went to dinner, leaving them in prayer. We took a hasty dinner and returned, and found them as humble and as loving as could be desired.

On my way to Rochester, as we passed through a village some thirty miles east, a brother minister, seeing me on the canal-boat, jumped aboard to have a little conversation, intending to ride but a little way and return. He, however, became interested, and finding where I was going, he made up his mind to keep on and go with me. We had been there but a few days, when this minister became so convicted that he could not help weeping aloud at one time as he passed along the street. As he and I prayed much together, I was struck with his faith in regard to what the Lord was going to do there. The spirit of prayer was poured out powerfully, so

much so that some persons stayed away from the public services to pray, being unable to restrain their feelings.

Here I must introduce Mr. Abel Clary, son of a very excellent man, and an elder of the church where I was converted. He had been licensed to preach; he was so burdened with the souls of men, that he was not able to preach much, his whole time and strength being given to prayer. He was very silent, as almost all are who have that powerful spirit of prayer.

A gentleman who lived about a mile west of the city called one day, and asked if I knew Mr. Abel Clary. I told him that I knew him. "Well," said he, "he is at my house, and has been there for some time, and I don't know what to think of him." I said, "I have not seen him at any of our meetings." "No," he replied, "he cannot go to meeting, he says. He prays nearly all the time, day and night, and in such an agony of mind that I do not know what to make of it. Sometimes he cannot even stand on his knees, but will lie prostrate on the floor, and groan and pray in a manner that quite astonishes me." I said to the brother, "I understand it; please keep still. It will all come out right; he will surely prevail."

I knew at the time a considerable number who were exercised in the same way. Deacon P——, of Camden, Oneida county; Deacon T——, of Rodman, Jefferson county; Deacon B——, of Adams, in the same county; this Mr. Clary, and a large number of women, partook of the same spirit. Father Nash, who in several of my fields of labour came and aided me, was another. This Mr. Clary continued in Rochester as long as I did, and did not leave until after I had.

The moral aspect of things was greatly changed. It was a young city, full of thrift, enterprise, and sin. The inhabitants were intelligent and enterprising; but as the revival swept through, and converted the most influential people, the change was wonderful.

At a subsequent period I was conversing with a lawyer, who was converted at this revival, and who soon after had been made district attorney. His business was to superintend the prosecution of criminals. He was thoroughly acquainted with the history of crime in that city. In speaking of the revival, he said to me, many years afterwards: "I have been examining the records of the criminal courts, and I find that whereas our city has increased since that revival three-fold, there are not one-third as many prosecutions as there had been up to that time. This is the wonderful influence that that revival had upon the community." The public affairs of the city have been, in great measure, in the hands of Christian men; the controlling influences have been on the side of Christ.

Among other conversions I mention that of Mr. P——, a prominent bookseller, a disbeliever in the Divine authority of the Bible. He was a reader, a thinker, a man of keen, shrewd mind, strong will, and most decided character. He was of good outward morals, and a gentleman highly respected. He came to my room and said, "Mr. Finney, there is a great movement here on the subject of religion; but I am a sceptic, and I want you to prove that the Bible is true." The Lord enabled me at once to discern his state of mind, so far as to decide the course I should take. I said, "Do you believe in the existence of God?" "Oh, yes!"

he said, "I am not an Atheist." "Well, do you believe that you have treated God as you ought? Have you respected His authority? Have you loved Him? Have you done that which you thought would please Him, and with the design to please Him? Don't you admit that you ought to love Him, and ought to worship Him, and ought to obey Him, according to the best light you have?" "Oh, yes!" he said, "I admit all this." "But have you done so?" I asked. "Why, no," he answered, "I cannot say that I have." "Well, then," I replied, "why should I give you further information, and further light, if you will not do your duty and obey the light you already have? Now, when you live up to your convictions, when you repent of your neglect thus far, I will try to show you that the Bible is from God. Until then, it is of no use for me to do any such thing." I did not sit down, and had not asked him to sit down. He replied, "I do not know but that is fair;" and retired.

I heard no more until the next morning. He came again; and he clapped his hands and said, "Mr. Finney, God has wrought a miracle! I went down to the store," he continued, "after I left you, thinking of what you had said; and I made up my mind that I would repent of what I knew was wrong in my relations to God, and that hereafter I would live according to the best light I had. And when I made up my mind to this," said he, "my feelings so overcame me that I fell; and I do not know but I should have died if it had not been for Mr. —, who was with me in the store." From this time he has been a praying, earnest Christian. For years he has been one of the trustees of Oberlin College, has stood by us through trials, and has aided with his means and influence.

During this revival, persons wrote letters from Rochester to friends abroad, giving an account of the work, which were read in different churches throughout several States; and were instrumental in producing revivals. Many came in from abroad to witness the great work, and were converted. A physician was so attracted by what he heard that he came from Newark, New Jersey, to see what the Lord was doing, and was himself converted. He was a man of talents and culture, and has been for years an ardent Christian.

One evening, when I made a call for the anxious to come forward, a man of influence in a neighbouring town came, and several members of his family, and gave themselves to God. Indeed, the work spread like waves in every direction. I preached in as many places as I had time and strength to do, while my main labours were in Rochester. I went to Canandaigua and the word took effect, and many were converted. The pastor, Rev. Ansel Eddy, entered heartily into the work. A former pastor also did what he could. Wherever I went, the word took effect; and it seemed only necessary to present the claims of Christ to secure the conversion of men.

The greatness of the work at Rochester attracted so much attention throughout New York, New England, and many parts of the United States that the very fame of it was an efficient instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God in promoting the greatest revival of religion throughout the land that this country had then ever witnessed.

CHAPTER XXI.

REVIVAL IN AUBURN, BUFFALO, PROVIDENCE, AND BOSTON.

DURING the latter part of the time I was at Rochester I was overdone; and some leading physicians made up their minds that I never would preach any more. My labours had continued through six months; and near their close, Rev. Dr. Wisner, of Ithaca, came and spent some time, witnessing and helping forward the work. I was invited to many fields; and among others was urged by Dr. Nott, president of Union College, at Schenectady, to labour with him, and if possible secure the conversion of his students.

In company with Dr. Wisner and Josiah Bissell, I started in the spring of 1831. I left my wife and children at Rochester, as the travelling was too dangerous and too fatiguing for them. When we arrived at Geneva, Dr. Wisner insisted on my going home with him to rest awhile. He pressed me hard; and finally told me that the physicians in Rochester had told him to take me home, for I was going to die; that I would never labour any more, for I had consumption. I replied that I had been told this before; but that the doctors did not understand my case; that I was only fatigued, and a little rest would bring me up.

Dr. Wisner finally gave up his importunity, and I passed on to Auburn. The going was so bad that sometimes we could not get on more than two miles an hour. As I had many dear friends in Auburn, and was

much fatigued, I made up my mind to stop and rest till the next stage. I stopped at the house of Mr. T—— S——, a son of Chief Justice S——. He was an earnest Christian, and a dear friend.

After sleeping quietly, I had risen, and was preparing to take the stage, which was to arrive early, when a gentleman came in with the request for me to remain, signed by that large number of influential men of whom I have spoken as resisting the revival in 1826. These, on the former occasion, carried their opposition so far as to break from Dr. Lansing's congregation, and form a new one. In the meantime, Dr. Lansing had been called to another field; and Rev. Josiah Hopkins, of Vermont, was settled as pastor of the First Church. The paper contained an earnest appeal to me to stop and labour for their salvation. This was very striking. They alluded to the opposition formerly made, and besought me to overlook it, and stop and preach the Gospel.

This request did not come from the pastor, nor from his church, but from those who had formerly led in the opposition. But the pastor and his church pressed me to comply with the request. They appeared as much surprised as myself at the change. I went and spread the subject before God, and soon made up my mind what to do. I told the pastor and his elders that I was fatigued, and nearly worn out; but that upon certain conditions I would remain. I would preach twice upon the Sabbath, and two evenings during the week; but that they should take all the rest upon their own hands; that they must not expect me to attend other meetings than those at which I preached; that they must them-

selves instruct inquirers, and conduct prayer and other meetings. I knew that they understood that part of the work. I furthermore stipulated that neither they nor their people should visit me, except in extreme cases; for that I must have my days, Sundays excepted, that I might rest.

On the first or second Sabbath that I preached, I saw that the word was taking such powerful hold that at the close I called for those whose minds were made up to come forward and give themselves to Christ. Much to my surprise, and to the surprise of the pastor and many members, the first I observed coming forward was the man that had exerted more influence than any other in opposition to the former revival. He came forward followed by a number of the persons who had signed that paper; and that evening there was such a demonstration as to produce general interest.

I have spoken of Mr. Clary as the praying man at Rochester. He had a brother, a physician, living in Auburn. I observed in the congregation the solemn face of this Mr. Clary; he looked as if he was borne down with an agony of prayer. Being well acquainted with him, and knowing the great gift of God that was upon him, I was glad to see him. He sat in the pew with his brother, the Doctor, who was also a professor of religion by experience.

At intermission, as soon as I came from the pulpit, Mr. Clary, with his brother, invited me to go home, spend the intermission, and get some refreshments.

At his house we gathered about the table, and Dr. Clary turned to his brother and said, "Brother Abel, will you ask a blessing?" Brother Abel bowed his

head and began, audibly, to ask a blessing. He had uttered but a sentence or two when he broke instantly down, moved suddenly back from the table, and fled to his chamber. The Doctor supposed he had been taken suddenly ill, and rose and followed him. In a few moments he came down and said, "Mr. Finney, Brother Abel wants to see you." Said I, "What ails him?" Said he, "I do not know; but he says you know. He appears in distress, I think it is the state of his mind." I understood in a moment, and went. He lay groaning upon the bed, the Spirit making intercession for him, and in him, with groanings that could not be uttered. I had barely entered the room, when he made out to say, "Pray, Brother Finney." I knelt down and helped in prayer, by leading his soul out for the conversion of sinners. I continued to pray until his distress passed, and then I returned to dinner.

I understood that this was the voice of God. I saw the Spirit of prayer was upon him, I felt His influence upon myself, and took it for granted that the work would move on powerfully. I believe that every one of those men that signed, making a long list, was converted. But a few years since, Dr. S——, of Auburn, wrote to me to know if I had preserved that paper, wishing, as he said, to ascertain whether every one of the men that signed was not converted. The paper has been mislaid; and although it may some time be found, yet I could not answer his inquiry.

I stayed at Auburn six Sabbaths, leaving the rest of the labour for the pastor and members of the church. There was little or no opposition. Ministers and Christians took hold of the work, and everybody that

had a mind to work found enough to do, and good success.

The pastor found that in the six weeks five hundred souls had been converted. This revival seemed to be only a wave of Divine power, reaching Auburn from the centre at Rochester, whence such a mighty influence had gone out over the length and breadth of the land.

Near the close, a messenger arrived from Buffalo, with an earnest request that I should visit that city. The revival in Rochester had prepared the way in Auburn, and had also prepared the way in Buffalo. The messenger informed me the work had begun, a few had been hopefully converted; but they felt that other means needed to be used, and they urged me so hard that I turned back through Rochester to Buffalo. I spent about one month at Buffalo, during which time a large number of persons were hopefully converted.

The work, as at Auburn and Rochester, took effect very generally among the more influential classes. Dr. Lord, then a lawyer, was converted at that time; also Mr. H——, the father of Dr. H——. He was most wealthy and influential, and a man of good morals, fair character, and high standing as a citizen, but impenitent. His wife was a Christian, and had long been praying for him; but when I began to preach, and insisted that the sinner's "cannot" is his "will not," that the difficulty to be overcome was voluntary wickedness, Mr. H—— rebelled very decidedly against such teaching. He insisted that it was false in his case; for he was conscious of being willing to be a Christian, and that he had long been willing.

As his wife informed me of the position he occupied,

I did not spare him; but hunted him from his refuges, and answered all objections, and met all excuses. He became excited. A man of strong will, he declared that he did not, and would not, believe such teaching. He said so much in opposition as to draw around him some with whom he had no sympathy, except in their opposition; but I did not hesitate to press him in every sermon with his unwillingness to become a Christian.

After his conversion, he told me that he was shocked and ashamed when he found that some scoffers had taken refuge behind him. One evening, he said, he sat directly across the aisle from a most notorious scoffer. Repeatedly, while I was preaching, this man, with whom he had no sympathy at all on other subjects, would look toward him and smile, and give indications of fellowship with Mr. H——'s opposition. He said that, on discovering this, his heart rose with indignation; and he said: "I am not going to be in sympathy with that class; I will have nothing to do with them."

However, that very night I pressed the consciences of sinners so hard, and made so strong an appeal to them to come to Christ, that he could not contain himself. As soon as the meeting was out he began to resist, and to speak against what had been said. The aisles were full, and people were crowding on every side.

That night he could not sleep. His mind was so exercised that he rose as soon as there was any light, and went off to a place where he had some waterworks which he called the Hydraulics. There in the grove he knelt down to pray. He said he had felt, during the night, as if he must get away by himself, so that he could speak aloud and let out his voice and heart, as he

was pressed beyond endurance with the sense of sin, and with the necessity of immediately making peace with God. To his mortification, when he knelt down he found that his heart would not pray. He had no words; he had no desires that he could express in words. It appeared that his heart was as hard as marble, and that he had not the least feeling.

In this state it occurred that he could say the Lord's prayer. So he began, "Our Father, which art in heaven." He said as soon as he uttered the words he was convicted of his hypocrisy in calling God his Father. When he added, "Hallowed be Thy name," it almost shocked him. He saw he was not sincere, that the words did not express the state of his mind. Then he uttered, "Thy kingdom come." Upon this he almost choked. He saw that he did not want the kingdom of God to come; that it was hypocritical in him to say so, and that he could not say it as really expressing the sincere desire of his heart. And then came, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Here he was brought face to face with the will of God. He had been told from day to day that he was opposed to this will; that he was not willing to accept it; that it was his voluntary opposition to God, to His law, and His will, that was the only obstacle in the way of his conversion. This consideration he had resisted and fought with desperation. But here, on his knees, he was brought face to face with that question; and he saw with perfect clearness that what he had been told was true: that he was not willing that God's will should be done; and that he did not do it himself, because he would not.

Here the question of his rebellion was brought so

strongly before him that he saw it would cost a mighty struggle to give up voluntary opposition to God. And then he gathered up all the strength of his will and cried aloud, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." He said he was perfectly conscious that his will went with his words; that he made a full surrender, and accepted Christ just as He was offered in the Gospel. He gave up his sins, and embraced the will of God as his universal rule of life. The language of his heart was, "Lord, do with me as seemeth Thee good. Let Thy will be done with me, and with all creatures on earth, as it is done in heaven." He said he prayed freely, as soon as his will surrendered; and his heart poured itself out like a flood. His rebellion passed away, his feelings subsided into a calm, and a sweet peace seemed to fill his soul.

He rose and went to his house, and told his anxious wife, who had been praying for him, what the Lord had done for his soul; and confessed that he had been all wrong in his opposition, and entirely deceived as it respected his willingness to be a Christian. From that time he became an earnest labourer for the promotion of the work of God.

Early in the autumn of 1831, I accepted an invitation to hold what was then called "a protracted meeting," or a series of meetings, in Providence. I laboured mostly in the church of which Dr. Wilson was pastor. I remained about three weeks, holding meetings every evening, and preaching three times on the Sabbath. The Lord poured out His Spirit upon the people, and the work of grace commenced and went forward.

I had observed in the congregation, on the Sabbath, a

young woman of great beauty sitting in a pew with her brother. She had a very intellectual and earnest look, and seemed to listen to every word I said with attention and seriousness.

I was the guest of Mr. Josiah Chapin; and in going from the church I observed this young brother and sister going up the same street. I pointed them out to Mr. Chapin, and asked who they were. He informed me that they were Mr. and Miss A——, brother and sister, and remarked that she was considered the most beautiful girl in Providence. I asked if she was a professor; and he said, no. I told him I thought her very seriously impressed, and asked him if he did not think it would be well for me to call and see her. He spoke discouragingly, and thought that possibly I might not be cordially received. He thought that she was a girl so much caressed and flattered, and that her surroundings were such, that she probably entertained but little serious thought in regard to salvation. But he was mistaken; and I was right in supposing that the Spirit of the Lord was striving with her.

A few days after, she called to see me. I knew her at once; she was very thoroughly awakened; but her real convictions of sin were not ripened into that state which I thought was necessary before she could be really brought intelligently to accept the righteousness of Christ. I therefore spent an hour or two trying to show her the depravity of her heart. She recoiled from my searching questions; but convictions seemed to ripen; and she became more serious.

When I had said what I thought was necessary, she got up with a manifest feeling of dissatisfaction, and left.

I was confident the Spirit of God had so thoroughly taken hold of her that what I had said would not be shaken off.

Two or three days afterwards she called again. I could see that she was greatly bowed down in spirit. She sat down, and with candour said, "Mr. Finney, I thought when I was here before that your questions and treatment of me were pretty severe. But I see now that I am all you represented me to be. Indeed, had it not been for my pride and regard for my reputation, I should have been as wicked a girl as there is in Providence. I can see clearly that my life has been restrained by pride, and not from regard to God. I see that God has made use of my pride and ambition to restrain me from disgraceful iniquities. I have been petted and flattered, and have stood upon my dignity; and have maintained my reputation from purely selfish motives." She went on and showed that her convictions were thorough and permanent. She did not appear to be excited in anything she said. She had a fervent nature, a strong will, an uncommonly well-balanced and cultivated intellect.

After conversing with her, and giving thorough instruction, we bowed before the Lord in prayer; and she gave herself unreservedly to Christ. She was in a state of mind that seemed to render it easy to renounce the world. She has always been a very interesting Christian. Not many years after conversion she was married to a wealthy gentleman in New York. For several years I had no direct correspondence with her. Her husband took her into a circle with which I had no particular acquaintance. Since, I have had Christian correspondence with her, and have never ceased to be interested. The grace of God was too strong for the

world, even in a case like this, in which every worldly fascination was surrounding her.

While I was at Providence, the question of my going to Boston was agitated by the ministers and deacons of the several Congregational Churches. I was not aware of what they were doing; but Dr. Wisner, pastor of the Old South Church, came to Providence and attended our meetings. I learned that he was sent by the ministers "to spy out the land and bring back a report."

The work at Providence was of a searching character as respected professors. Old hopes were shaken, there was a shaking among the dry bones in the different churches. So terribly was a deacon of one of the churches searched, that he said, "Mr. Finney, I do not believe there are ten real Christians in Providence. We are all wrong, we have been deceived." Dr. Wisner was thoroughly convinced that the work was genuine and extensive, and that there was no indication of influences or results to be deplored.

After Dr. Wisner returned to Boston, I received a request from the Congregational ministers and churches, to go to that city.

After I had spent some weeks, in preaching in the different congregations, I consented to supply Mr. Green's church in Essex Street for a time. We had a blessed work of grace; and a number were converted in the city.

I had become fatigued, as I had laboured about ten years without anything more than a few days or weeks of rest during the whole period. The ministerial brethren were true men, had taken hold of the work as well as they knew how, and laboured faithfully and efficiently in securing good results.

By this time a second Free Church had been formed in New York. Mr. Joel Parker's church, the first Free Church, had grown so large that a colony had gone off and formed a second: to which Rev. Mr. Barrows, professor at Andover, had been preaching. Some earnest brethren wrote to me from New York, proposing to lease a theatre, upon condition that I would come. They proposed to get what was called the Chatham Street Theatre, in the heart of the most irreligious population of New York. It was owned by men who were very willing to have it transformed. We had three children, and I could not well take my family, while labouring as an evangelist. My strength, too, had become a good deal exhausted; and on praying and looking the matter over, I concluded that I would accept the call from the Second Free Church, and labour, for a time at least, in New York.

CHAPTER XXII.

LABOURS IN NEW YORK, IN 1832, AND ONWARD.

MR. LEWIS TAPPAN, with other brethren, leased Chatham Street Theatre, and fitted it up as a suitable place to accommodate the various charitable societies in holding their anniversaries. They called me, and I accepted the pastorate of the Second Free Presbyterian Church. I left Boston in April, 1832, and commenced labours in that theatre. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out, and we had an extensive revival.

About midsummer the cholera appeared; the panic became great, and many Christian people fled into the country. The cholera was very severe that summer, more so than it ever has been since; and it was especially fatal in the part where I resided. I recollect counting, from our house, five hearses drawn up at the same time at doors within sight. I remained until the latter part of the summer, not being willing to leave while the mortality was so great; but I found that the influence was undermining my health. I went into the country for two or three weeks. On my return, I was installed as pastor of the church. During the installation services I was taken ill; and it was plain that I was seized with cholera. The gentleman next door was seized about the same time, and before morning he was dead. The means used for recovery gave my system a shock from which it took long to recover. However,

toward spring I was able to preach again. I invited two brethren to help in holding meetings. We preached in turn for two or three weeks, but little was accomplished. I saw that it was not the way to promote a revival there, and I drew the meeting, in that form, to a close.

On the next Sabbath I made appointments to preach every evening during the week; and a revival immediately commenced, and became powerful. I continued to preach for twenty evenings in succession, besides preaching on the Sabbath. The converts known to us numbered five hundred, and our church became so large that very soon a colony was sent off to form another church; and a suitable building was erected at the corner of Madison and Catherine Streets.

The work continued to go forward. We held meetings of inquiry once or twice a week, and oftener, and found a goodly number of conversions reported. The people were thoroughly united, were well trained in labours for the conversion of sinners, and were a most devoted and efficient church. They would go out into highways and hedges whenever called upon to do so. When we wished to give notice of extra meetings, little slips of paper, on which was printed an invitation to attend the services, would be carried from house to house, in every direction, by members of the church; and the house could be filled any evening in the week. Our ladies were not afraid to go and gather in all classes.

There were connected with the front of the theatre large rooms, which were fitted up for prayer-meetings; they were exceedingly convenient. There were three galleries; and those rooms were connected with the galleries, one above the other

I instructed my church members to scatter themselves over the house, to keep their eyes open in regard to any that were seriously affected, and, if possible, to detain them for conversation and prayer. They were true to their teaching, and were on the look-out at every meeting; and they had faith to dismiss fears, and speak to any whom they saw affected. In this way the conversion of many was secured.

The firm of Naylor and Company, who were the great cutlery manufacturers in Sheffield, England, had a house in New York, and a partner of the name of H——. Mr. H—— was worldly, had travelled a good deal, and had resided in several of the principal cities of Europe. One of the clerks had come to our meetings, and been converted, and felt anxious for the conversion of Mr. H——. The young man, for some time, hesitated about asking him to attend, but he finally ventured; and in compliance with his earnest entreaty, Mr. H—— came. He sat near the broad aisle. Mr. Tappan saw that he manifested emotion; and seemed uneasy, as if on the point of going out. Mr. H—— acknowledged that he was several times on the point of leaving, because affected; but he remained till the blessing was pronounced. Mr. Tappan, as soon as the blessing was pronounced, introduced himself as a partner of Arthur Tappan and Co., a firm well known in New York.

I have heard Mr. H—— relate the facts with emotion. He said that Mr. Tappan took him gently by the button of his coat, and spoke kindly, and asked if he would not remain for prayer and conversation. He tried to excuse himself and to get away; but Mr. Tappan was so gentlemanly and kind that he could not well get away.

He was importunate, and "he held fast to my button, so that," said he, "an ounce weight at my button was the means of saving my soul." The people retired, and Mr. H——, among others, was persuaded to remain. We had a thorough conversation; and Mr. H—— became hopefully converted.

When I first went to Chatham Street Chapel, I informed the brethren that I did not wish to fill the house with Christians from other churches; my object was to gather from the world. We gave ourselves to labour with good success. Conversions were multiplied, and when I left New York we had seven free churches, whose members were labouring to secure the salvation of souls. They were supported by collections taken from Sabbath to Sabbath. If at any time there was a deficiency, there was a number of brethren who would supply the deficiency from their own purses; we never had difficulty in meeting pecuniary demands.

A more harmonious, prayerful, and efficient people I never knew than the members of those churches. They were not among the rich, although there were several men of property belonging to them. In general they were gathered from the middle and lower classes. We aimed to preach the Gospel to the poor.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE years of Mr. Finney's life after the long period of evangelistic labours so far described, do not, of course, present any such features of interest as the pages we have reproduced. Ill-health compelled him to visit Europe repeatedly. Although he preached frequently in England, he does not record any very striking circumstances in connection with these services. In New York a very blessed work seems to have been carried on in association with various mission churches established by Mr. Finney ; but in 1835 he was persuaded to spend half of each year as theological tutor of a college at Oberlin, intended to produce ministers of his own sort. How, after his own experience, Mr. Finney had been brought to imagine that such ministers could be produced in a college—he having himself always refused to go to one—does not appear.

But from this time, with the exception of occasional times of remarkable effort in one city or another, his life seems to have become a comparatively settled and quiet one.

Throughout all this period he was taking a very active part in the anti-slavery movement, with which Oberlin became very closely connected from the fact that they admitted white and coloured students on equal terms—a very daring step in those days, when anti-slavery men in the Union were frequently in danger of their lives.

Judge G—— had united with other members of the bar in a written request to me to preach to lawyers.

Judge G—— was then one of the Judges of the Court of Appeals in the State, and held a high place in the estimation of the profession. I consented to deliver the lectures. I was aware of the half-sceptical state in which those members of the bar were, who were still unconverted. There was still left in the city a number of pious lawyers, converted in the revival of 1830 and 1831.

I began by asking this question: "Do we know anything?" My congregation became select. Brother Burchard's meetings opened an interesting place for one class of the community, and made more room for the lawyers, and those especially attracted by my course of lectures, in the house where I was preaching. It was completely filled, every night.

Judge G—— remarked to me, "Mr. Finney, you have cleared the ground to my satisfaction, thus far; but when you come to the question of endless punishment you will slip; you will fail to convince on that question." I replied, "Wait and see." This hint made me the more careful. The next day he volunteered the remark at once, "Mr. Finney, I am convinced. Your dealing with that subject was a success; nothing can be said against it." The manner in which he said this indicated that the subject had not merely convinced his intellect, but had deeply impressed him.

I was going on from night to night, but had not thought my select audience yet prepared for me to call for any decision on the part of inquirers; but I had arrived at a point where I thought it was time to draw

the net ashore. I had carefully been laying it around, and hedging them in by a train of reasoning that they could not resist. I was aware that lawyers are accustomed to listen to argument, to feel the weight of a logically presented truth; and had no doubt that the majority were thoroughly convinced, as far as I had gone; consequently I had prepared a discourse which I intended should bring them to the point, and if it appeared to take effect, I intended to call on them to commit themselves. Judge G—— had opposed the anxious seat; I expected he would do so again, as I knew he had strongly committed himself. When I came to preach the sermon of which I have spoken, I observed Judge G—— was not in the seat he usually occupied; and I could not see him anywhere among the members of the bar or the judges. I felt concerned, for I had prepared myself with reference to his case. I knew that if he would take a decided stand, it would have a very great influence upon all the legal profession in the city. However, I observed that he had come into the gallery, and had found a seat just at the head of the stairs. I went on; but near the close I observed that Judge G—— had gone. I felt distressed, for I concluded he had gone home; and that the sermon prepared with my eye upon him, had failed.

Just as I was drawing to a close, and my heart almost sinking with fear that I was to fail, I felt some one pulling at the skirt of my coat. I looked, and there was Judge G——. He said, “Mr. Finney, won’t you pray for me by name? and I will take the anxious seat.” I had said nothing about an anxious seat. There was a great gush of feeling in every part of the house. Many

held down their heads and wept; others seemed to be engaged in earnest prayer. He crowded around in front of the pulpit, and knelt immediately down. The lawyers arose and crowded into the aisles, and filled the open space in front, wherever they could get a place to kneel. The movement had begun without my requesting it; but I then publicly invited any, who were prepared to renounce their sins, and to accept Christ, to come forward, or wherever they could, and kneel down. We prayed, and I dismissed the meeting.

I appointed a meeting for inquirers, the next day at two o'clock, in the basement. I was surprised to find the room nearly full, and that the audience was composed almost exclusively of prominent citizens. This I continued from day to day, having an opportunity to converse freely, with numbers; and they were as teachable as children. A large number of lawyers were converted, Judge G—— at their head; as he had taken the lead in coming out on the side of Christ.

I had insisted much upon entire consecration to God, giving up all, body, soul, possessions, and everything, to be thereafter used for His glory, as a condition of acceptance. One day as I went into meeting, one of the lawyers, who had been in deep anxiety, took out of his pocket a paper, and handed me, remarking, "I deliver this to you as the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." On examining it, I found it to be a quit-claim deed, made out in regular order, and executed ready for delivery, in which he quit-claimed to the Lord Jesus Christ all ownership of himself, and of everything he possessed. The deed was in due form, with all the peculiarities and formalities of such conveyances.

The measures were simply preaching the Gospel, and abundant prayer, in private, in social circles, and in public; much stress always being laid upon prayer as an essential means of promoting the revival.

Meetings of inquiry were held, for those who were in the different stages of conviction; and after conversing with them, I was in the habit of summing up, and taking representative cases, and meeting objections, answering questions, correcting errors, and pursuing such a course as was calculated to strip them of every excuse, and bring them face to face with the question of present, unqualified, universal acceptance of the will of God in Christ Jesus.

The doctrine of endless punishment was fully insisted upon; and not only its justice, but the certainty that sinners will be endlessly punished, if they die in their sins, was strongly held forth.

Sinners were taught that if they regarded iniquity in their hearts the Lord would not hear them; and that while they remained impenitent, they did regard iniquity in their hearts. They were informed that God required them to pray, but to pray in faith, to pray in the spirit of repentance; and that when they asked God to forgive them, they were to commit themselves unalterably to His will.

I have always been particularly interested in the salvation of lawyers, and of all men of the legal profession. I understood pretty well their habits of reading and thinking. I have always found that when the Gospel was properly presented, they were the most accessible class; and I believe that, in proportion to their relative number, more have been converted than of any other

class. I have never seen a case in which Judges were not convinced of the truth of the Gospel, where they have attended meetings, in the revivals. I have often been affected, in conversing with members of the legal profession, by the manner in which they would consent to propositions, to which persons of ill-disciplined minds would have objected.

There was one of the Judges of the Court of Appeals, living in Rochester, who seemed to be possessed of a chronic scepticism. He was a reader and a thinker, a man of refinement and of intellectual honesty. His wife, having experienced religion under my ministry, was a particular friend. I have had very thorough conversation with that man. He said, "Mr. Finney, you always in your public discourses carry me right along with you; but while I assent to the truth of what you say, I do not feel right; somehow my heart does not respond." He was one of the loveliest of unconverted men, and it was both a grief and a pleasure to converse with him. I have conversed with him when his whole mind seemed to be agitated. And yet he has never been converted; his praying and idolized wife has gone to her grave; his only son was drowned before his eyes. After these calamities, I wrote him a letter, referring to conversations I had had with him, and trying to win him to a source from which he could get consolation. He replied in all kindness; but dwelling upon his loss, said there could be no consolation to meet a case like that. He was truly blind to all consolation he could find in Christ. He could not conceive how he could ever accept this dispensation and be happy. He had lived through one revival after another; and although his mouth was

shut, so that he had no excuse, and no refuge, still he mysteriously remained in unbelief.

Several of the lawyers, at this time converted, gave up their profession and went into the ministry. Among these was one of Chancellor W——'s sons, who appeared to be soundly converted. For some reason he went to Europe and to Rome, and finally became a Roman Catholic priest. He has been for years labouring zealously to promote revivals among them, holding protracted meetings; and, as he told me when I met him in England, trying to accomplish in the Roman Catholic Church what I was endeavouring to accomplish in the Protestant Church. Mr. W—— seems to be an earnest minister of Christ, given up, heart and soul, to the salvation of Roman Catholics. He sought me out, and came very affectionately to see me; and we had just as pleasant an interview as if we had both been Protestants. He said nothing of his peculiar views, but only that he was labouring among the Roman Catholics, to promote revivals. Many ministers have been the fruits of the revivals in Rochester.

It was a fact that often interested me, that lawyers would come to my room, when pressed hard, and were on the point of submission, for conversation and light, on some point which they did not apprehend; and I observed, again and again, that when those points were cleared up, they were ready at once to submit. Indeed, they take a more intelligent view of the plan of salvation than any other class to whom I have preached, or with whom I have conversed.

Very many physicians have also been converted, in the revivals I have witnessed. I think their studies

incline them to scepticism, or to materialism. Yet they are intelligent; and if the Gospel is set before them, stripped of those peculiar features which are embodied in hyper-Calvinism, they are as readily converted as any other class. Their studies have not prepared them so readily to apprehend the moral government of God, as those of the legal profession; but I have found them open to conviction, and by no means a difficult class to deal with.

In 1843 Mr. Finney was again in Boston for the winter, during which he seems to have been greatly blessed in his own soul. Yet, although he says that his experience that winter exceeded all that he had previously experienced—so much that at times he could not realize that he had ever been before truly in communion with God—he seems to have been rather occupied in private than in public labours, and he complains that there was no great work done owing to the fear of ministers and deacons as to what the Unitarians would say, “if, in their measures to promote religion, they launch out in such a way as to wake the people up. Everything must be done in a certain way. The Holy Spirit is grieved by their yielding to such a bondage.”

I have laboured in Boston in five powerful revivals; and I must express my sincere conviction that the greatest difficulty in the way of overcoming Unitarianism, and the forms of error there, is the timidity of Christians. Knowing that they are constantly exposed to the criticisms of Unitarians, they have become over-cautious. Their faith has been depressed; and I do fear that the prevalence of Unitarianism and Universalism has kept them back from holding forth the danger of the impeni-

tent, as President Edwards presented it. The doctrine of endless punishment, the necessity of entire sanctification, or the giving up of all sin, as a condition of salvation—indeed the doctrines that are calculated to arouse men—are not, I fear, held forth with that frequency and power that are indispensable to the salvation of that city.”

In connection with services held in Western in 1854, Mr. Finney records the following remarkable cases of conversion.—

One young man was the son of pious parents, and had long been made the subject of prayer. His parents were prominent members of the church; his father was one of the elders, and his mother was a praying woman. When I commenced he became exceedingly bitter against the preaching, and all that was done for the promotion of the revival. He committed himself with the strength of his will against it; and affirmed that neither Finney nor hell could convert him. He said very hateful and profane things; but I am not aware that he had ever been suspected of outward immorality.

But the word of God pressed him, till he could stand it no longer. He came to my room; his appearance was truly startling. I seldom if ever saw a person whose mind had made such an impression upon his countenance. He appeared almost insane; and trembled in such a manner that when he was seated, the furniture was jarred by his trembling. When I took his hand, it was cold; his lips were blue; his whole appearance was alarming. The fact is, he had stood out against convictions as long as he could endure. When he sat down, I said, “My dear young man, what is the matter?” “Oh,” said he,

“I have committed the unpardonable sin.” I replied, “What makes you say so?” “Oh,” said he, “I know that I have; and I did it on purpose.”

He said, “Several years ago a book was put into my hands, called ‘The Pirate’s Own Book.’ I read it, and it produced a most extraordinary effect upon my mind. It inspired me with a kind of terrible and infernal ambition to be the greatest pirate that ever lived. I made up my mind to be at the head of all the highway robbers, and bandits, and pirates whose history was ever written. But my religious education was in my way. The teaching and prayers of my parents seemed to rise up before me, so that I could not go forward. But I had heard that it was possible to grieve the Spirit of God away, and to quench His influence so that one would feel it no more. I had read also that it was possible to sear conscience, so that that would not trouble me; and after my resolution was taken, my first business was to get rid of religious convictions, so as to be able to go on and perpetrate robberies and murders without compunction. I therefore set myself deliberately to blaspheme the Holy Ghost.” He then told me in what manner he did this, and what he said; but it was too blasphemous to repeat.

He continued: “I then felt that it must be that the Spirit of God would leave me, and that conscience would no more trouble me. After a while I made up my mind that I would commit some crime, and see how it would affect me. There was a school-house across the way from our house; and one evening I went and set it on fire. I then went to bed. Soon, however, the fire was discovered. I arose, and mingled with the crowd that

gathered to put it out; but all efforts were in vain, and it burnt to the ground." To burn a building in that way was a State-prison offence. He was aware of this. I asked him if he had gone farther in crime. He replied, No. And I think he added that he did not find his conscience at rest about it, as he expected. I asked if he had ever been suspected of having burnt it. He replied that he did not know that he had; but that other young men had been suspected, and talked about. I asked what he proposed to do. He replied that he was going to the trustees to confess; and he asked if I would accompany him.

I went with him to one of the trustees, and the young man asked if I would tell the facts. The trustee was a good man, and a great friend of the parents of this young man. The announcement affected him deeply. The young man stood speechless. After a while I said, "We will go and see the other trustees." The gentleman replied, "No, you need not go; I will see them myself, and tell them the whole story." He assured the young man that he himself would freely forgive him; and he presumed that the other trustees, and the people in the town, would forgive him, and not subject him or his parents to any expense.

I then returned to my room, and the young man went home. Still he was not at rest. As I was going to meeting in the evening, he met me at the door and said, "I must make a public confession. Several young men have been suspected of this thing; and I want people to know that I had no accomplice, that nobody but God and myself knew it. Mr. Finney, won't you tell the people? I will be present, and say anything that may

be necessary to say, if anybody should ask any questions; but I do not feel as if I could open my mouth. You can tell them all about it."

When the people were assembled, I related the facts. The family was so well known and beloved in the community that the statement made a great impression. The people sobbed and wept all over the congregation. After he had made this full confession he obtained peace. Of his religious history since, I have recently learned that he retained his hold upon Christ, and did not seem to backslide. He went into the army during the rebellion, and was slain at the battle of Fort Fisher.

I have passed over a number of cases of crime committed by persons who came for advice, and told me the facts. In many instances, restitution, sometimes to the amount of many thousands of dollars, was made by those whose consciences troubled them, either because they had obtained the money directly by fraud, or by some selfish over-reaching in business relations.

The winter that I first spent in Boston resulted in making many such revelations. I had preached there one Sabbath in the morning upon, "Whoso covereth his sins shall not prosper;" and in the afternoon on the remainder of the verse, "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy." The results of those sermons were extraordinary. For weeks afterwards, persons of almost all ages, and of both sexes, came for spiritual advice, disclosing the fact that they had committed frauds, and sins of almost every description. Some young men had defrauded employers; women had stolen watches, and almost every article of female apparel. Indeed, it seemed as if the word of the Lord

was sent home with such power as to uncover a very den of wickedness. It would certainly take me hours to mention the crimes that came to my knowledge through the confessions of those who had perpetrated them; but in every instance the persons seemed to be penitent, and were willing to make restitution to the utmost of their ability.

But to return to Western. The revival was interesting; and there was a goodly number of souls born to God. One young lady was teaching the village school. Her father was a sceptic; she was an only daughter, and a great favourite. He was a man of considerable influence, but did not attend our meetings. He lived on a farm away from the village. Indeed, the village is very small, and the inhabitants are scattered through the valley of the Mohawk, and over the hills on each side; so that the inhabitants have to come a considerable distance to meeting.

I heard that this young woman did not attend our meetings much, and that she manifested considerable opposition to the work. In passing the school-house one day I stepped in to speak with her. At first she appeared surprised; I had never been introduced, and should not have known her, if I had not found her in that place. She knew me, however, and appeared as if she recoiled from my presence. "My child," I said, "how is it with you? Have you given your heart to God?" This I said while I held her hand. Her head fell, and she made no effort to withdraw her hand. I saw in a moment that a subduing influence came over her, and so deep and remarkable, that I felt almost assured that she would submit to God on the spot.

The most that I expected, was to have a few words with her that might set her thinking, and to appoint a time to converse more at large; but the impression was at once so manifest, and she seemed to break down, with a few sentences quietly and softly spoken to her; she seemed to give up opposition, and to be in readiness to lay hold on the Lord Jesus Christ. I then asked if I should say a few words to the scholars; and she wished I would. I did so, and then asked if I should present herself and scholars to God in prayer. She said she wished I would, and became deeply affected in the presence of the school. We engaged in prayer, and it was a very solemn, melting time. The young lady from that time seemed to have passed from death unto life. She did not live long before she passed, I trust, to heaven.

[Similar cases are reported in connection with a visit to England.]

One night, as I was preaching, a man rose and crowded his way to the platform, and said, "I have committed a robbery." He began to make a confession, interrupting me. I saw he was excited; and Brother Davison whispered to him, and took him down into a side room. He found that he had committed a crime for which he was liable to be transported. He gave him advice, and I heard no more of it that evening. In a few days the man obtained a hope.

One evening I preached on confession and restitution, and it created a most tremendous movement among business men. One told me that he had been and made restitution of fifteen hundred pounds, in a case where he thought he had not acted upon the principle of

loving his neighbour as himself. The consciences of men under such circumstances are exceedingly tender. The gentleman told me that a dear friend had died and left him to settle his estate. He had done so, and simply received what the law gave him for labour and expense; but in hearing that sermon, it occurred to him that as a friend and a Christian he could better afford to settle that estate without charging anything, than the family could afford to allow him the fees. The Spirit of God that was upon him led him to feel so keenly, that he went and refunded the money.

There was a case in Rochester, in New York, of the same kind. A tender conscience led a man to feel keenly on the subject of acting on the principle of doing to others as we would that they should do to us. A man of considerable property was converted in one of the revivals, who had been transacting business for a widow, in a village not far distant. The business consisted in the transfer of real estate, for which he had been paid for services some fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars. As soon as he was converted he thought of this; and upon reflection thought he had not done by that widow and those fatherless children as he would wish another to do by his widow and fatherless children. He therefore went over, and stated his view of the subject as it lay before his mind. She replied that she did not see it in that light; that she considered herself very much obliged to him, that he had transacted her business in such a way as to make for her all she could ask or expect. She declined, therefore, to receive the money which he offered to refund.

He told her that he was dissatisfied, and wished that

she would call in some of her trustworthy neighbours. She called in some Christian friends, men of business; and they laid the matter before them. They said that the affair was a business transaction, and it was evident that he had transacted the business to the acceptance of the family and to their advantage; and they saw no reason why he should refund. He heard what they had to say; but before he left he called on the lady again, and said, "My mind is not at ease. If I should die and leave my wife a widow and children fatherless, and a friend of mine should transact such business for them, I should feel as if he might do it gratuitously. I cannot take any other view of it than this." Whereupon he laid the money upon her table and left.

In preaching in one of the large cities, I was dwelling upon the dishonesties of business, and the over-reaching plans of men; and how they justify themselves in violations of the golden rule. Before I was through, a gentleman arose and asked if he might propose a question. He then supposed a case; and he asked if that would come under the rule I had propounded. I said, "Yes, I think that it clearly would." He sat down; but I learned that he went away and made restitution to the amount of thirty thousand dollars. I could relate great numbers of instances in which persons have been led to act in the same manner, under the powerfully searching influences of the Spirit of God.

The work spread in Bolton, until one of the ministers who had been engaged in directing canvassing said publicly that they found that the revival had reached every family in the city; and that every family had been visited.

If we had had any place of worship large enough, we should probably have had ten thousand persons in the congregations. All we could do was to fill the hall, and then use such other means as we could to reach the multitudes in other places of worship.

I had been told one of the great mill-owners was very miserly; he had a great thirst for riches, and had been spoken of as being a very hopeless case. The revival had reached a number of that class; but this man seemed to stand out, and his worldly-mindedness and miserly spirit had seemed to eat him up. Contrary to expectations, he called on me. I had a serious conversation with him. He acknowledged that he had been a great miser; and that he had once said to God that if He would give him another hundred thousand pounds, he would be willing to be eternally damned. I was shocked at this; but could see that he was terribly convicted of the sinfulness of that state of mind.

I repeated to him a part of the sixth chapter of Matthew, where Christ warns men against laying up treasure on earth, and recommends them to lay up treasure in heaven. I finally came to that verse: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He leaned toward me, and appeared to be as much interested as if it were all new. When I repeated this verse, he said with earnestness, "Do you believe that?" I said, "Be sure I believe it. It is the word of God." "Well then," said he, "I'll go it;" and sprang upon his feet in the utmost excitement. "If that is true," said he, "I will give up all to Christ at once." We knelt down, and I presented his case to God; and he

seemed to break down like a child. From that time he appeared to be a very different man. His miserly feelings seemed to melt away. He took hold of that work like a man in earnest, and went and hired a city missionary, and set him to work to win souls.

From 1860 to 1875 Mr. Finney remained constantly at Oberlin, lecturing on theology, and, at the same time, fulfilling the office of pastor of the First Church up to 1872. During the last month of his life, he preached one Sabbath morning in the First Church, and another in the Second.

Notwithstanding the abundant and exhausting labours of his long public life, the burden of years seemed to rest lightly upon him. He still stood erect, as a young man, retained his faculties to a remarkable degree, and exhibited to the end the quickness of thought and feeling and imagination which always characterized him. His life and character, perhaps, never seemed richer in the fruits and the beauty of goodness, than in these closing years and months. His public labours were of course very limited; but the quiet power of his life was felt as a benediction upon the community, which, during forty years, he had done so much to guide and mould and bless.

His last day on earth was a quiet Sabbath, which he enjoyed in the midst of his family, walking out with his wife at sunset, to listen to the music at the opening of the evening service in the church near by. Upon retiring he was seized with pains which seemed to indicate some affection of the heart; and after a few hours of suffering, as the morning dawned, he died, August 16th, 1875, lacking two weeks of having completed his eighty-third year.

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